

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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## VERY HARD CASH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

### CHAPTER VII.

HE did follow her, and, convinced that she would be engaged ten deep in five minutes, hustled up to the master of the ceremonies and begged an introduction. The great banker's son was attended to at once.

Julia saw them coming, as her sex can see, without looking. Her eyes were on fire, and a delicious blush on her cheeks, when the M.C. introduced Mr. Alfred Hardie with due pomp. He asked her to dance.

"I am engaged for this dance."

"The next?" said Hardie, timidly.

"With pleasure."

But when they had got so far, they were both seized with bashful silence; and, just as Alfred was going to try and break it, Cornet Bosanquet, age 18, height 5 feet 4 inches, strutted up to them with clanking heel, and, glancing haughtily up at him, carried Julia off, like a steam-tug towing away some fair schooner.

To these little thorns society treats all anxious lovers, but the incident was new to Alfred, and discomposed him; and, besides, he had nosed a rival in Sampson's prescription. So now he thought to himself, "that little ensign is 'his puppy.'"

To get rid of Mrs. Dodd he offered to conduct her to a seat. She thanked him; she would rather stand where she could see her daughter dance: on this he took her to the embrasure of a window opposite where Julia and her partner stood, and they entered a circle of spectators.

The band struck up, and the solemn skating began.

"Who is this lovely creature in white?" asked a middle-aged solicitor. "In white? I do not see any beauty in white," replied his daughter. "Why there, before your eyes," said the gentleman, loudly.

"What, that girl dancing with the little captain? I don't see much beauty in her. And what a rubbishing dress."

"It never cost a pound, making and all," suggested another Barkingtonian nymph.

"But what splendid pearls," said a third: "can they be real?"

"Real! what an idea!" ejaculated a fourth: "who puts on real pearls as big as peas with muslin at twenty pence the yard?"

"Weasels!" muttered Alfred, and quivered all over: and he felt to Mrs. Dodd so like a savage going to spring that she laid her hand upon his wrist, and said gently, but with authority, "Be calm, sir! and oblige me by not noticing these people."

Then they threw dirt on her bouquet, and then on her shoes, while she was winding in and out before their eyes a Grace, and her soft muslin drifting and flowing like an appropriate cloud round a young goddess.

"A little starch would make it set out better. It's as limp as a towel on the line."

"I'll be sworn it was washed at home."

"Where it was made."

"I call it a rag, not a gown."

"Do let us move," whispered Alfred.

"I am very comfortable here," whispered Mrs. Dodd. "How can these things annoy my ears while I have eyes? Look at her! She is by far the best dressed lady in the room; her muslin is Indian, and of a quality unknown to these provincial shopkeepers; a rajah gave it us: her pearls have been in every court in Europe; and she herself is beautiful, would be beautiful dressed like the dowdies who are criticising her: and, I think, sir, she dances as well as any lady can, encumbered with an Atom that does not know the figure."

At this, as if to extinguish all doubt, Julia flung them a heavenly smile; she had been furtively watching them all the time, and she saw they were talking about her.

The other Oxonian squeezed up to Hardie. "Do you know the beauty? She smiled your way."

"Ah!" said Hardie, deliberately, "you mean that young lady with the court pearls, in that exquisite Indian muslin, which floats so gracefully, while the other muslin girls are all crimp and stiff, like little pigs clad in crackling."

"Ha! ha! ha! Yes. Introduce me!"

"I could not take such a liberty with the queen of the ball."

Mrs. Dodd smiled, but felt nervous and ill at ease. She thought to herself, "Now here is a generous, impetuous pest." As for the hostile party, staggered at first by the masculine inso-

lence of young Hardie, it soon recovered, and, true to its sex, attacked him obliquely, through his white ladye.

"Who is the beauty of the ball?" asked one, haughtily.

"I don't know; but not that mawkish thing in limp muslin."

"I should say Miss Hetherington is the belle," suggested a third.

"Oh, beyond question."

"Which is Miss Hetherington?" asked the Oxonian coolly of Alfred.

"Oh, she won't do for *us*. It is that little chalk faced girl, dressed in pink with red roses; the pink of vulgarity and bad taste."

At this both Oxonians laughed arrogantly, and Mrs. Dodd withdrew her hand from the speaker's arm and glided away behind the throng. Julia looked at him with marked anxiety. He returned her look, and was sore puzzled what it meant, till he found Mrs. Dodd had withdrawn softly from him; then he stood confused, regretting, too late, he had not obeyed her positive request, and tried to imitate her dignified forbearance.

The quadrille ended. He instantly stepped forward, and, bowing politely to the cornet, said authoritatively, "Mrs. Dodd sends me to conduct you to her. With your permission, sir." His arm was offered and taken before the little warrior knew where he was.

He had her on his arm, soft, light, and fragrant as zephyr, and her cool breath wooing his neck; oh, the thrill of that moment! but her first word was to ask him with considerable anxiety, "Why did mamma leave you?"

"Miss Dodd, I am the most unhappy of men."

"No doubt! no doubt!" said she, a little crossly. She added with one of her gushes of naïveté, "and I shall be unhappy too if you displease mamma."

"What could I do? A gang of snobesses were detracting from—somebody. To speak plainly, they were running down the loveliest of her sex. Your mamma told me to keep quiet. And so I did till I got a fair chance, and then I gave it them in their teeth." He ground his own, and added, "I think I was very good not to kick them."

Julia coloured with pleasure, and proceeded to turn it off; "Oh! most forbearing and considerate," said she: "ah, by the way, I think I did hear some ladies express a misgiving as to the pecuniary value of my costume; ha! ha! Oh—you—foolish—thing!—Fancy minding that! Why it is in little sneers that the approval of the ladies shows itself at a ball, and it is a much sincerer compliment than the gentlemen's bombastical praises; 'the fairest of her sex,' and so on; that none but the 'silliest of her sex' believes."

"I did not say the fairest of her sex; I said the loveliest of her sex."

"Oh, that alters the case entirely," said Julia, whose spirits were mounting with the lights and music, and Alfred's company, "so now come and

be reconciled to the best and wisest of her sex; ay, and the beautifullest, if you but knew her sweet, dear, darling face as I do; there she is; let us fly. Mamma, here is a penitent for you, real or feigned."

"Real, Mrs. Dodd," said Alfred. "I had no right to disobey you and risk a scene. You served me right by abandoning me; I feel the rebuke and its justice. Let me hope your vengeance will go no further."

Mrs. Dodd smiled at the grandiloquence of youth, and told him he had mistaken her character. "I saw I had acquired a generous, hot-headed ally, who was bent on doing battle with insects; so I withdrew; but so I should at Waterloo, or anywhere else, where people put themselves in a passion."

The band struck up again.

"Ah!" said Julia, "and I promised you this dance; but it is a waltz; and my guardian angel objects to the *valse à deux temps*."

"Decidedly. Should all the mothers in England permit their daughters to romp, and wrestle, in public, and call it waltzing, I must stand firm till they return to their senses."

Julia looked at Alfred despondently; he took his cue and said with a smile, "Well, perhaps it is a little brutal; a donkey's gallop and then twirl her like a mop."

"Since you admit that, perhaps you can waltz *comme il faut*?" said Mrs. Dodd.

Alfred said he ought; he had given his whole soul to it in Germany last Long.

"Then I can have the pleasure of dropping the tyrant. Away with you both while there is room to circulate."

Alfred took his partner delicately; they made just two catlike steps forward, and melted into the waltz.

It was an exquisite moment. To most young people Love comes after a great deal of waltzing. But this pair brought the awakened tenderness, and trembling sensibilities, of two burning hearts, to this their first intoxicating whirl. To them, therefore, everything was an event, everything was a thrill—the first meeting and timid pressure of their hands, the first delicate enfolding of her supple waist by his strong arm but trembling hand, the delightful unison of their unerring feet, the movement, the music, the soft delicious whirl, her cool breath saluting his neck, his ardent but now liquid eyes seeking hers tenderly, and drinking them deep, hers that now and then sipped his so sweetly—all these were new and separate joys, that linked themselves in one soft delirium of bliss. It was not a waltz; it was an Ecstasy.

Starting almost alone, this peerless pair danced a gauntlet. On each side admiration and detraction buzzed all the time.

"Beautiful! They are turning in the air."

"Quite gone by. That's how the old fogies dance."

Chorus of shallow males. "How well she waltzes."

Chorus of shallow females. "How well he waltzes."

But they noted neither praise nor detraction: they saw nothing, heard nothing, felt nothing, but themselves and the other music, till two valsers *à deux temps* took "a tremendous header" into them. Thus smartly reminded they had not earth all to themselves, they laughed good humouredly, and paused.

"Ah! I am happy!" gushed from Julia. She blushed at herself, and said severely, "You dance very well, sir:" this was said to justify her unguarded ejaculation, and did, after a fashion. "I think it is time to go to mamma."

"So soon. And I had so much to say to you."

"Oh, very well. I am all attention."

The sudden facility offered set Alfred stammering a little. "I wanted to apologise to you for something—you are so good you seem to have forgotten it—but I dare not hope that—I mean at Henley—when the beauty of your character, and your goodness, so overpowered me, that a fatal impulse——"

"What do you mean, sir?" said Julia, looking him full in the face, like an offended lion, while, with true feminine and Julian inconsistency her bosom fluttered like a dove. "I never exchanged one word with you in my life before to-day; and I never shall again, if you pretend the contrary."

Alfred stood stupefied, and looked at her in piteous amazement.

"I value your acquaintance highly, Mr. Hardie, now I have made it, as acquaintances are made; but please to observe, I never saw you before scarcely; not even in church."

"As you please," said he, recovering his wits in part. "What you say I'll swear to."

"Then I say, never remind a lady of what you should wish her to forget."

"I was a fool. And you are an angel of tact and goodness."

"Oh, now I am sure it is time to join mamma," said she, in the driest, drollest, way. "Valsons."

They waltzed down to Mrs. Dodd, exchanging hearts at every turn, and they took a good many in the space of a round table, for in truth both were equally loth to part.

At two o'clock, Mrs. Dodd resumed commonplace views of a daughter's health, and rose to go.

Her fly had played her false, and, being our island home, it rained buckets. Alfred ran, before they could stop him, and caught a fly. He was dripping. Mrs. Dodd expressed her regrets; he told her it did not matter; for him the ball was now over, the flowers faded, and the lights darkness visible.

"The extravagance of these children!" said Mrs. Dodd to Julia, with a smile, as soon as he was out of hearing. Julia made no reply.

Next day she was at evening church: the congregation was very sparse. The first glance revealed Alfred Hardie standing in the very next

pew. He wore a calm front of conscious rectitude; under which peeped sheep-faced misgivings as to the result of this advance; for, like all true lovers, he was half impudence, half timidity; and both on the grand scale.

Now Julia in a ball-room was one creature, another in church. After the first surprise, which sent the blood for a moment to her cheek, she found he had come without a prayer-book. She looked sadly and half reproachfully at him; then put her white hand calmly over the wooden partition, and made him read with her out of her book. She shared her hymn-book with him, too, and sang her Maker's praise modestly and soberly but earnestly, and quite undisturbed by her lover's presence.

It seemed as if this pure creature was drawing him to heaven holding by that good book, and by her touching voice. He felt good all over. To be like her he tried to bend his whole mind on the prayers of the church, and, for the first time, realised how beautiful they are.

After service he followed her to the door. Island home again, by the pailful; and she had a thick shawl but no umbrella. He had brought a large one on the chance; he would see her home.

"Quite unnecessary; it is so near."

He insisted; she persisted; and, persisting, yielded. They said but little; yet they seemed to interchange volumes, and, at each gaslight they passed, they stole a look, and treasured it to feed on.

That night was one broad step more towards the great happiness, or great misery, which awaits a noble love. Such loves, somewhat rare in Nature, have lately become so very rare in Fiction, that I have ventured, with many misgivings, to detail the peculiarities of its rise and progress. But now for a time it advanced on beaten tracks; Alfred had the right to call at Albion Villa, and he came twice; once when Mrs. Dodd was out. This was the time he stayed the two hours.

A Mrs. James invited Jane and him to tea and exposition. There he met Julia and Edward, who had just returned. Edward was taken with Jane Hardie's face and dove-like eyes; eyes that dwelt with a soft and chastened admiration on his masculine face and his model form, and their owner felt she had received "a call" to watch over his spiritual weal. So they paired off.

Julia's fluctuating spirits settled now into a calm, demure, complacency. Her mother, finding this strange remedial virtue in youthful society, gave young parties, inviting Jane and Alfred in their turn. Jane hesitated, but, as she could no longer keep Julia from knowing her worldly brother, and hoped a way might be opened for her to rescue Edward, she relaxed her general rule, which was, to go into no company unless some religious service formed part of the entertainment. Yet her conscience was ill at ease; and, to set them an example, she took care, when she asked the Dodds in return, to have a

clergyman there of her own party, who could pray and expound with unction.

Mrs. Dodd, not to throw cold water on what seemed to gratify her children, accepted Miss Hardie's invitation; but she never intended to go, and at the last moment wrote to say she was slightly indisposed. The nature of the indisposition she revealed to Julia alone. "That young lady keeps me on thorns. I never feel secure she will not say or do something extravagant or unusual: she seems to suspect sobriety and good taste of being in league with impiety. Here I succeed in bridling her a little; but encounter a female enthusiast in her own house? Merci! After all, there must be something good in her, since she is your friend, and you are hers; let her pass: I have something more serious to say to you before you go there. It is about her brother. He is a flirt: in fact, a notorious one, more than one lady tells me."

Julia was silent, but began to be very uneasy; they were sitting and talking after sunset, yet without candles; she profited, for once, by that amazing gap in the intelligence of "the sex."

"I hear he pays you compliments; and I have seen a disposition to single you out. Now, my love, you have the good sense to know that, whatever a young man of that age says to you, he says to many other ladies; but your experience is not equal to your sense; so profit by mine; a girl of your age must never be talked of with a person of the other sex: it is fatal; fatal! but if you permit yourself to be singled out, you will be talked of inevitably, and distress those who love you. It is easy to avoid injudicious duets in society; oblige me by doing so to-night."

To show how much she was in earnest, Mrs. Dodd hinted that, were her admonition neglected, she should regret, for once, having kept clear of an enthusiast.

Julia had no alternative; she assented in a faint voice. After a pause she faltered out, "And suppose he should esteem me seriously?"

Mrs. Dodd replied quickly, "Then that would be much worse. But," said she, "I have no apprehensions on that score; you are a child, and he is a precocious boy, and rather a flirt. But forewarned is forearmed. So now run away and dress, sweet one: my lecture is quite ended."

The sensitive girl went up to her room with a heavy heart. All the fears she had lulled of late revived. She saw plainly now that Mrs. Dodd only accepted Alfred as a pleasant acquaintance: as a son-in-law he was out of the question. "Oh, what will she say when she knows all?" thought Julia.

Next day, sitting near the window, she saw him coming up the road. After the first movement of pleasure at the bare sight of him, she was sorry he had come. Mamma's suspicions awake at last, and here he was again; the third call in one fortnight! She dared not risk an interview with him, ardent and unguarded, under

that penetrating eye, which she felt would now be on the watch.

She rose hurriedly, said as carelessly as she could, "I am going to the school," and, tying her bonnet on all in a flurry, whipped out at the back door with her shawl in her hand just as Sarah opened the front door to Alfred. She then shuffled on her shawl, and whisked through the little shrubbery into the open field, and reached a path that led to the school, and so gratified was she at her dexterity in evading her favourite, that she hung her head, and went murmuring, "Cruel, cruel, cruel!"

Alfred entered the drawing-room gaily, with a good-sized card and a prepared speech. This was not the visit of a friend but a functionary; the treasurer of the cricket-ground, come to book two of his eighteen to play against the All England Eleven next month. "As for you, my worthy sir (turning to Edward), I shall just put you down without ceremony. But I must ask leave to book Captain Dodd. Mrs. Dodd, I come at the universal desire of the club; they say it is sure to be a dull match without Captain Dodd. Besides, he is a capital player."

"Mamma, don't you be caught by his chaff," said Edward, quietly. "Papa is no player at all. Anything more unlike cricket than his way of making runs—"

"But he makes them, old fellow; now you and I, at Lord's the other day, played in first-rate form, left shoulder well up, and achieved—with neatness, precision, dexterity, and despatch—the British duck's-egg."

"Misericorde! What is that?" inquired Mrs. Dodd.

"Why, a round O," said the other Oxonian, coming to his friend's aid.

"And what is that, pray?"

Alfred told her "the round O," which had yielded to "the duck's-egg," and was becoming obsolete, meant the cypher set by the scorer against a player's name, who is out without making a run.

"I see," sighed Mrs. Dodd: "it penetrates to your very sports and games. And why British?"

"Oh, 'British' is redundant: thrown in by the universities."

"But what does it mean?"

"It means nothing. That is the beauty of it. British is inserted in imitation of our idols, the Greeks; they adored redundancy."

In short, poor Alfred, though not an M.P., was talking to put off time, till Julia should come in: so he now favoured Mrs. Dodd, of all people, with a flowery description of her husband's play, which I, who have not his motive for volubility, suppress. However, he wound up with the captain's "moral influence." "Last match," said he, "Barkington did not do itself justice. Several, that could have made a stand, were frightened out, rather than bowled, by the London professionals. Then Captain Dodd went in, and treated those artists with the same good humoured contempt he would a parish bowler,



and, in particular, sent Mynne's over-tossed balls flying over his head for six, or to square leg for four, and, on his retiring with twenty-five, scored in eight minutes, the remaining Barking-tonians were less funky, and made some fair scores."

Mrs. Dodd smiled a little ironically at this tirade, but said she thought she might venture to promise Mr. Dodd's co-operation, should he reach home in time. Then, to get rid of Alfred before Julia's return, the amiable worldling turned to Edward. "Your sister will not be back; so you may as well ring the bell for luncheon at once. Perhaps Mr. Hardie will join us."

Alfred declined, and took his leave with far less alacrity than he had entered with; Edward went down stairs with him.

"Miss Dodd gone on a visit?" asked Alfred, affecting carelessness.

"Only to the school. By-the-by, I will go and fetch her."

"No, don't do that; call on my sister instead, and then you will pull me out of a scrape. I promised to bring her here: but her saintship was so long adorning 'the poor perishable body,' that I came alone."

"I don't understand you," said Edward. "I am not the attraction here. It is Julia."

"How do you know that? When a young lady interests herself in an undergraduate's soul, it is a pretty sure sign she likes the looks of him. But perhaps you don't want to be converted; if so, keep clear of her. 'Bar the fell dragon's blighting way; but shun that lovely snare.'"

"On the contrary," said Edward, calmly, "I only wish she *could* make me as good as she is, or half as good."

"Give her the chance, old fellow, and then it won't be your fault if she makes a mess of it. Call at two, and Jenny will receive you very kindly, and will show you you are in the 'gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.' Now, won't that be nice?"

"I will go," said Edward, gravely.

They parted. Where Alfred went the reader can perhaps guess; Edward to luncheon.

"Mamma," said he, with that tranquillity which sat so well on him, "don't you think Alfred Hardie is spoony upon our Julia?"

Mrs. Dodd suppressed a start, and (perhaps to gain time before replying sincerely) said she had not the honour of knowing what "spoony" meant.

"Why, sighs for her, and dies for her, and fancies she is prettier than Miss Hardie. He must be over head and ears."

"Fie child!" was the answer. "If I thought so, I should withdraw from their acquaintance. Excuse me; I must put on my bonnet at once, not to lose this fine afternoon."

Edward did not relish her remark: it menaced more Spoons than one. However, he was not the man to be cast down at a word: he lighted a cigar, and strolled towards Hardie's house. Mr. Hardie, senior, had left three days ago

on a visit to London; Miss Hardie received him; he passed the afternoon in calm complacency, listening reverently to her admonitions, and looking her softly out of countenance, and into earthly affections, with his lion eyes.

Meantime his remark, so far from really seeming foolish to Mrs. Dodd, was the true reason for her leaving him so abruptly. "Even this dear slow Thing sees it," thought she. She must talk to Julia more seriously, and would go to the school at once. She went up-stairs, and put on her bonnet and shawl before the glass, then moulded on her gloves; and came down equipped. On the stairs was a large window, looking upon the open field; she naturally cast her eyes through it, in the direction she was going, and what did she see but a young lady and gentleman coming slowly down the path towards the villa. Mrs. Dodd bit her lip with vexation, and looked keenly at them, to divine on what terms they were. And the more she looked the more uneasy she grew.

The head, the hand, the whole person of a young woman walking beside one she loves, betrays her heart to experienced eyes watching unseen: and most female eyes are experienced at this sort of inspection. Why did Julia move so slowly? especially after that warning. Why was her head averted from that encroaching boy, and herself so near him? The anxious mother would much rather have seen her keep her distance, and look him full in the face. Her first impulse was that of leopardesses, lionesses, hens, and all the mothers in nature; to dart from her ambush and protect her young; but she controlled it by a strong effort; it seemed wiser to desecrate the truth, and then act with resolution: besides, the young people were now almost at the shrubbery; so the mischief, if any, was done.

They entered the shrubbery.

To Mrs. Dodd's surprise and dismay they did not come out this side so quickly. She darted her eye into the plantation; and lo! Alfred had seized the fatal opportunity foliage offers, even when thinnish: he held Julia's hand, and was pleading eagerly for something she seemed not disposed to grant; for she turned away and made an effort to leave him. But Mrs. Dodd, standing there quivering with maternal anxiety, and hot with shame, could not but doubt the sincerity of that graceful resistance. If she had been quite in earnest, Julia had fire enough in her to box the little wretch's ears. She ceased even to doubt, when she saw that her daughter's opposition ended in his getting hold of two hands instead of one, and devouring them with kisses, while Julia still drew her head and neck quite away, but the rest of her supple frame seemed to yield and incline, and draw softly towards her besieger, by some irresistible spell.

"I can bear no more!" gasped Mrs. Dodd aloud, and turned to hasten and part them; but even as she curved her stately neck to go, she caught the lovers parting; and a very pretty one too, if she could have looked at it, as these things ought always to be looked at: Artistically.

Julia's head and lovely throat, unable to draw the rest of her away, compromised; they turned, declined, drooped, and rested one half moment on her captor's shoulder, like a settling dove: the next, she scudded from him, and made for the house alone.

Mrs. Dodd, deeply indignant, but too wise to court a painful interview with her own heart beating high, went into the drawing-room: and there sat down, to recover some little composure. But she was hardly seated when Julia's innocent voice was heard calling "Mamma! mamma!" and soon she came bounding into the drawing-room, brimful of good news, her cheeks as red as fire, and her eyes wet with happy tears; and there confronted her mother, who had started up at her footstep, and now, with one hand nipping the back of the chair convulsively, stood lofty, looking strangely agitated and hostile.

The two ladies eyed one another, silent, yet expressive; like a picture facing a statue; but soon the colour died out of Julia's face as well, and she began to cower with vague fears before that stately figure, so gentle and placid usually, but now so discomposed and stern.

#### PANAMA AS A HOME.

THAT English man or woman of average intellect, education, and civilisation should be, by circumstances best known to themselves, condemned to settle down in this particular spot of land nine degrees distance from the equator, will strike an English reader as having fallen on lines of a hard nature. Let him judge for himself.

To these particular lines, then, destiny affixed the names of my brother and myself; falling straight upon this little midland neck of the New World, we felt destiny would we should follow, and follow we did. My brother was a merchant; I, his sister and housekeeper, accompanied him. We had pretty courageous hearts, and only our two unmarried selves to care for. In the Old World jogging on together, in the New, why not? We will make the best of everything. With such our watchword we answered the various arguments used first to dissuade and disgust us from going, afterwards by fellow-passengers who liked to magnify every horror and give unpleasant impressions by their various descriptions of the following encouraging nature.

English, French, Germans, Spanish, Portuguese, West Indians, Spanish South Americans—we were a mixed medley enough. There was a corpulent gentleman, very black in skin, very white in linen and waistcoats, and a yellow lady, his wife—Martinique people returning home. The lady wore a Paris bonnet when she landed at St. Thomas, and the most delicate of flounced silks, white kid gloves and bronzed boots; the gentleman was of a facetious and gallant nature; he would place his shiny black hand on his white waistcoat, would bow profoundly when

addressing a lady, and his laugh bore a family resemblance to that of Mr. Christy's minstrels. There was a young Limanian gentleman bound Lima-wards, of an indolent, somewhat insolent nature, who, lounging about in a gay dressing-gown, handsome, but not over-clean, an unshorn face, and no visible shirt, yawned away his day, cursing the fate that brought him into a floating prison, and amusing himself with a malignant satisfaction by disenchanting all the innocent adventurers, like ourselves, bound to new lands for the first time.

"Panama!" he echoed, contemptuously, when my brother informed him of our destination; "a hell upon earth! a sink of yellow fever, of intermittent fever and ague, of dirt, of fiery burning heat—overrun with Yankees."

"Panama!" cried another, with a derisive laugh; "give you joy of it. Thermometer ranges from 96 deg. to 110 deg. in the shade. If you live six months, thank your stars."

"Well," a third gentleman observes placidly, "I never lived there, myself, thank God, but I've crossed the isthmus, and I've been three days in the dirty town. The air of the isthmus laid me prostrate with fever, and the bells sent me raving mad while I lay sick, that's all I know of Panama."

"Nonsense," said my brother, when I discussed these remarks with him; "never believe any one's word till you can judge for yourself;" and so encouraged, I agreed to make the best of it, as usual.

The sunbeams fell hot and fierce on the little Yankeeified town of Aspinwall or Colon, when we got in. A strange unearthly howl reached our ears from the shore, which I, in my innocence, vaguely imagined to be the howl of wild beasts! This was the train.

Aspinwallers are attached to their small spot of swamp. "Oh, it's very superior to Panama." (Panama is the rival city.) "It is decidedly healthier, decidedly cooler, decidedly cleaner." In Aspinwall no greater encouragement awaited us. Poor Panama was evidently the bugbear of the world, great and small.

Now this I will maintain, that you may travel far and wide before you will see stranger, wilder, finer forest scenery and vegetation than that of the Panama isthmus, as you tear through a vast silent forest, where giant trees—compared to which our largest English oaks are as toys—where the mango, the guava, the palm, untouched by man's hand, grow and produce and reproduce till millions and millions multiply; truly the sight of God's work and man's labour brought into such strange incongruous contact, gives rise to new and stirring thoughts.

By this passage the New World, cut in half, has been, as it were, united, not without hard, fearful labour, struggle, and death: the road was strewn with dead labourers—victims of fever, exhaustion, suicide, like a battle-field. An object was gained through bloodshed—as battles are gained. It is a solemn thought when one passes through.

The Pacific in sight; presently the wooden roof of the railway in view, shining white in the fierce sun. The Bay of Panama, the church towers, the little islands dotting the sea, and the volcanic hills at the back of the tower—these present a picturesque effect. Driving to the hotel through the streets we are less charmed; general idea being ruin, poverty, dirt, and pigs. These are lean, debilitated pigs, which decline moving one inch out of the way as the omnibus, with its mules and brisk Jamaica driver, approach,—close upon them; must the poor beasts inevitably be crushed? Happily not. With a short remonstrative grunt, they slowly remove about one clear inch from the mules' feet, and are saved. The dogs are lean and languid, and a horribly mongrel race; the human beings ditto, every tint from deep inky-black to the palest yellow being seen; the children swarm quite as extensively as the pigs. Men, women, children, and beasts are equally disinclined either to "move on" or out of the way. I don't like the look of the butchers' stalls in the market-place; I don't admire meat torn in long lean slips, dry as hard leather, sunning as it hangs; I don't find it odorous, but Frank says, "This is the back of the town—the outskirts." Ah, yes, like Stratford, Bow, and Whitechapel; the market-place is decidedly not West-end.

Past the market-place, and entering the town, there is an improvement. Some walls have been commenced, but never finished, called the barriers; beyond is a large old church in the main street, with a little oratory or small chapel beside it, where a lady is kneeling, while a wretched cripple halts at the door, meditating apparently whether he shall seek redress for his many infirmities from a patron saint. There are shops—stores, rather—restaurants such as you see in primitive French towns, more churches, and a fine cathedral standing in the lonely plaza, old enough but not infirm. Our hotel is good, considering everything; but the bill long enough to shorten the weight in our purses. We are told the proprietor pays one hundred pounds per month for his house; therefore the thought of those daily inevitable two baths per diem at a dollar each seems less terribly exorbitant. Pride feels no pain, neither must a clean skin. A bottle of vin ordinaire, which in Paris might be worth eight sous, at a dollar: *that* is hard. We might dispense with wine if not with water.

To take a stroll through the streets of Panama to that fashionable promenade, the Ramparts, may have its charms; and to people determined, like ourselves, not to feel discouragement, I suppose it had. True, the streets are stony and the pavement uneven; occasionally a shower of dirty water is thrown over you as you walk under the balconies; the lean pigs and the wretched mongrels refuse to move. The streets are neither sweet nor clean. But we were assured the Ramparts would fully repay us.

To look far out to sea;—in the distance are a couple of English frigates and an American line-of-battle ship; the islands, Flamenco, kept

as a dépôt for stores by the Yankees, the blue hills of Taboga and Tabogilla—the sight is pretty, but it is dismal. All this part looks gloomy, deserted, and lifeless. You know, as you pace up and down, that under your feet the wretched prisoners are languishing; for the prison is built under the Ramparts, and a deadly black hole must it be; there are a couple of cannon, guarded by two dirty, dilapidated, very villainous-looking soldiers, who may occasionally be seen stretched full length on the wall, fast asleep by their post. Two or three "loafers" idle languidly about; and then a native nurse, very décolletée and very innocent of crinoline, her hair adorned profusely with ribbons, flowers, and combs, and some fat, pale children pass by. But all life seems stagnant and languishing. The whole place looks as if, when the rest of the world had moved on, it was left behind, forgotten or ignored.

Such were our reflections as we returned. The hotel, with its slight bustle and movement, seemed cheerful after the sight of the Ramparts, and we agreed not to make that our daily promenade.

The Panameños are not business-like. Greedy and avaricious to a degree, they yet seem uninterested as to whether they sell or not. I remember sending my boy to execute some commissions. He returned saying, "The lady in the store was at breakfast and could not attend to him." On another occasion, although I sent twice, I received for reply, "The gentleman was out and had the key in his pocket."

English and Americans usually hire West Indian or American negroes and negroes for our servants; the natives are dull, lazy, and dirty, neither willing nor capable of being taught. As a rule, I found the Americans not to be trusted. There is the utterly degraded, coarse, brutal negro and mulatto (as a general rule I prefer the genuine black man and woman too); there is, also, the deeply hypocritical, Scripture-quoting, psalm-singing Jamaica nigger, in whom put not your trust; these are invariably arrant impostors. Other blacks are zealous in service, honest, faithful, painstaking, and foolish; they become deeply attached to you, and show you all sorts of delicate attentions in the way of offerings of flowers, cakes, fruit, &c. They bear your scoldings meekly, and, while the scolding is fresh in their minds, profit by it; they have not a shade of common sense nor judgment, they know little of morality, they are untidy, variable in spirits and health, pleasing in manner, likeable with all their faults.

I have never heard a truthful report of the climate of Panama. It is the fashion to report it as a burning fiery furnace, and pestilential. I would not call it either the one or the other. In our house (it was a cool one) the thermometer ranged from seventy-eight to eighty-four degrees Fahrenheit. I never knew it higher. I have even known the temperature to fall as low as seventy-two, and after a good long spell of Panama we feel that cold. The dry season, commencing nominally in December and lasting

until April, is the healthiest, and the first part of it, the pleasantest. In December and January the intense heat has not set in. Only in the morning, until the norther, as it is called, begins, is the warmth oppressive. By five p.m. it is becoming cool, and through the night the fine fresh north wind is delightfully refreshing. I have always found March and April most trying; then is the heat felt sensibly, and the effects are very debilitating.

The rainy season is, up to a certain time, merely showery, uncertain weather, and summer lightning, vivid enough, may be seen every night. Later there are terrific storms, sharp, short, and angry. Such crashes of thunder that the old, crazy town seems falling in one mighty smash, succeeded by tropical rain in vast sheets, as if heaven opened to pour forth its seas upon the earth.

A curious incident occurred on the 4th of July, the first anniversary of the American independence after the civil war commenced. The American consul was entertaining his friends, stars and stripes flying, when a great storm coming on, a tremendous flash of lightning struck the flag-staff down, rending the Union flag in pieces. I think the Yankees were a little startled. Now and then we are excited by a revolt. Much panic, a rush of the natives away to the mountains or Taboga, some firing in the streets, applications from the local authorities to the foreign navy to fight battles they cannot fight for themselves, some discussion, followed by panic on both sides, attacked and attackers, then peace. Such is a grand revolution in Panama.

Robberies are rare enough, and when they do occur are seldom brought home to the natives. However, the police are scarcely ever able to trace out robbers, and I only wonder, so encouraged, they are not commoner.

In Panama women thrive not. The children are large and forward, though very pale, an effect of the heat; but the women, ladies and peasants, are miserably lean and sallow, seldom, especially foreigners, keeping their health.

The small temptation to walk prevents their taking active exercise; the heat (no winter bracing them up) debilitates; they languish, lose strength, appetite, colour, grow old prematurely, yet rarely die suddenly or before their time. Intermittent fever and ague is common, and once the constitution receives that taint, nothing but change of climate eradicates it. Frequently after sufficient change they are enabled to return and enjoy as good health as a tropical climate can bring to those accustomed to a temperate one. Falling after a time into a somewhat languid condition myself, we decided on taking a little trip to the delightful island of Taboga, for change of air and scene.

From the bay the scene is certainly very enchanting, so much so that I would recommend all travellers who are favoured by the view to stay, and not run the risk of disenchantment. The island is divided into two parts; one is called the Morro, on which is an English factory, the ground being in English possession,

and separated from the mainland in high tides, when the sea covers a little neck of sand running between. There are pretty little cottages, clean and white, but built of wood, and cruelly hot. The island is very mountainous, the village very picturesque *at a distance*; but, alas! on landing and proceeding to our queer little abode, much in the style of a French lodging-house in some very out-of-the-way Norman village, great was our disenchantment. Hard flinty stones cutting straight through your boots, more dirt, à la Panama, many more pigs, lean dogs, and goats. The latter, together with enormous crabs, used to walk into our sitting-room and promenade at their ease; the hungry dogs would prowl about, terribly tame, sniffing after any food they could pick up; the cats, too, so gaunt, and lean, and hungry, poor beasts, for it is not a land of milk and honey, and neither human nor dumb animals fatten on good things.

There was a fine bath to be got after a hard clamber up the side of the mountain. More beautiful scenery, exquisite foliage, great magnificent trees, and a stream running along rocks and stones. Alas! though, I soon lost strength to rise from my bed at five, make the ascent of the mountain, and return, in spite of my cool plunge, heated and wearied, the sun having sufficient power to scorch not a little. On the whole, we had to confess that our expedition was a failure, the pure air of Taboga having so far changed my health as to produce incessant sick-headaches, for the heat is certainly worse than that of Panama; thermometer ranging from 86 to 89 all the time, and the wooden houses being little calculated for the climate.

One good effect came of our expedition. Comparing Taboga and Panama together, one feels that the latter is a civilised place. At least one has green shutters, a stone house to live in, such comforts as we had gathered round us, and ice—for ice, thanks to an enterprising Yankee storekeeper, is abundant, and a real necessity of life.

Panama is, to the world in general, a part only of the road leading to better, more genial places. It is best so. Few can lead a happy or a profitable life there.

#### SMALL-BEER CHRONICLES.

WHAT a terrible spectacle "a room full of people" presents to a contemplative mind. "A room full of people." As you make ready for it, in your dressing-chamber, you seem with every added garment to cover up your mind, just as you cover up your body. At last all is hidden except the face, and that is the only part of your frame which you can hide quite well without a cover. There is no need for a face-cloth, or a mask; your eyes can be controlled to see the right people, and to pass the wrong people, and the mouth will smile on Prospero, while for Unprospero it will be stern and set. There is a sensation comes over a man as he puts on his evening dress, about which no



doubt can be entertained. As he ties his neck-cloth and slips on his coat, he puts on a kind of armour which we of this period wear when we enter the social lists.

There is a certain apartment called a tea-room, to which men who are troubled with some small amount of modesty and nervousness resort before they ascend the stairs which lead to the great field of battle. In this tea-room they pause awhile to get their forces in order. Here, one man calls to his aid every encouraging thought he is able to summon, and then, leaving his untasted tea on the table, makes for the great staircase, and dashes desperately into the scene of action. He sees, among a little crowd of persons on the landing-place, Unprospero—sees him by some process of clairvoyance, for he does not look at him. He looks on over people's heads into the rooms within, straining to catch sight of some one worth talking to. He has begun this already, and this will go on the whole evening. Everybody is on tenter-hooks, everybody is either a small person looking out for a great person to tack himself on to, or a great person looking out for somebody still greater with whom he feels he ought to foregather rather than with the individual who has possession of him. Is not this the history of an "at home?" No one is attentive, every one is, as they say on the stage, "looking off."

About the door-way there are many snares set for our Rising Man. The Unprospero family muster strong there, ready for a pounce; but a man of social resources can push on. He can pretend to see some one in the distance who is making signs to him to draw near, or he can simply abstain from answering what that particular member of the Unprospero race may say to him. Onward goes the Rising Man. Here, is somebody worth a word, but unfortunately he is engaged in what he evidently finds an interesting conversation, and has only a nod for the Rising Man, who next makes up to the lady of the house, and then to one of the Miss Prosperos, whose ear he manages to get half-possession of, for a few seconds. The Rising Man exerts himself, for it is well that he ought to be seen engaged in conversation with this young lady, but it is his turn to be punished now. Miss Prospero cannot or will not attend. She, too, is "looking off," and when our worthy says what he thinks a good thing, she does not smile, but answers all at cross purposes, and presently actually addresses a tall young man who is standing near, even while our friend is in the act of speaking. The Rising Man feels a warm glow of fury, but, looking at the gentleman for whom Miss Prospero has deserted him, is not surprised, for he is one of those who has not got to rise at all, but who is born, if one may be allowed the expression, ready made.

Of all the many heart-breaking small things which one sees in the small world, surely the most discouraging is the desperate sophistication and want of freshness which characterise young ladies. To see such *calculating* powers in those who are young is something astonishing and de-

plorable. As they enter the gates of society the porter must hand them the fruit of knowledge surely. In a fortnight they know everything. They know whom to encourage and whom to slight, the exact share of attention to mete out to this and to them, they take a man's measure with the cold eyes of an appraiser, and weigh him in the scales of the world's approval before they listen to a word he has to say.

In "the room full of people" where we are making these observations, there are many opportunities of noting the great worldliness of quite young women. We have seen Miss Prospero cutting a Rising Man for a Risen Man, and a very little further off we find Miss Miranda Prospero flattering an elderly man of hateful appearance and feeble mind, who is one of the richest noblemen in the land, and still single. This love-chase on Miranda's part has been going on a long time, and is well understood "in society." It is probable that the pursuit will be rewarded with success; for the young lady's flatteries are agreeable to this worn-out man. Those flatteries are artfully administered, and great effort and pains this young girl gives to hold the ground she has gained, and even to get a surer footing; but one thing she cannot do:—she cannot keep her eyes in order. There is a good-looking fellow lounging on a sofa hard by, and carrying on a great flirtation with a married friend of Miss Miranda, and, from this pair, she finds it difficult to look away.

Why is it not distinctly understood among us that it is impossible for any human being to attend to two conversations at once? It is better not to try, for no good can come of it. Long practice may have made you very adroit at this pastime of riding two conversational horses at once, but, clever at it, or stupid at it, you will be found out. You think you can manage this feat perfectly. You imagine that you can absent yourself mentally from your companion for a short time, and then come back to him undiscovered. You think you can dive down to the other end of the table for a minute and a half, and then return to the surface again without having been missed. Not you! Your neighbour looks round while your attention is thus absent without leave, and he observes the blank, and makes his comments on it. No doubt it is a painful thing if your name is Jones, and you have just brought out a highly successful drama, to hear somebody within your hearing commenting upon the incidents and plots of "Mr. Jones's Play," and yet to compel yourself to give the whole of your attention to the lady next you, who is informing you that Lady Diana Horseflesh has determined this season that all the riding in the Park must and shall be done in the afternoon instead of the morning. It is not for a moment to be denied that this is hard, but it must be borne; and even when the conversation has turned on the *faults* of "Mr. Jones's Play," and you have the chance of hearing it abused, you must still be resolute, and deny yourself the exquisite pleasure of hearing yourself attacked—and defended.

We are still in our "room full of people." As our Rising Man slides along it, looking from right to left out of the corners of his eyes, so as to see at some distance the people he is *not* to see, and be able to give them a wide berth—as he pursues this dexterous course, he takes note from time to time of the hideous position of those unhappy persons, some of whom are to be found in all great assemblies, who know nobody. A contemptuous shudder passes through his frame as he notices those poor devils. And pitiable their situation really is. There are a brother and sister transplanted out of an entirely different world, to whom an invitation has been sent, because the lady of the house wishes to show them "some attention." What an attention! What an evening's pleasure! The card of invitation to this "at home," has been in the chimney-glass of these worthy people, who live and keep house together, for the last three weeks. Their very marrow has congealed in their bones with awe, as sitting in front of the fire the last thing before parting for the night, they have talked this thing over, and commented on the appalling fact that they were not even invited until half-past ten. It has taken a week of such evening séances to enable them even to answer that invitation, for in it Mrs. Prospero has requested "the honour" of Mr. and Miss Smalley's company, and this they are not used to, having only hitherto in their own immediate circle had the "pleasure" of their company solicited. How is this word honour to be dealt with? Shall they reply that they "will have the honour of accepting?" No, Mr. Smalley, who has an accurate soul, and a fastidious taste, informs his sister that it would be ungrammatical to express themselves as accepting in the future tense, because they do then and there and in that letter accept Mrs. Prospero's invitation. He thinks they had better stick to their accustomed form of words, and state that they "have great pleasure in accepting Mrs. P.'s kind invitation;" but when this has been written out, these two babes in the wood do not like the look of it, and go to work again. Miss Smalley asks whether they might not say that they will have the honour of availing themselves; but Mr. Smalley, the fastidious, thinks this sounds like clutching at the thing too much, and as to Miss Smalley's last suggestion, that perhaps they had better "have the honour of waiting upon Mrs. Prospero," he will not hear of that on any terms. At last they get desperate, and a letter is committed to the care of the post-office, in which it is stated that Mr. and Miss Smalley "are honoured in accepting the obliging invitation of Mrs. Prospero." When that note has been irrevocably committed to the pillar-post, they feel that their prospects are blighted for ever, and would sacrifice unheard-of sums to be able to get it back again.

And all this agony, all Miss Smalley's tortures in choosing a new dress, all her doubts about the way in which it should be trimmed, all her misgivings about her hair—what has come of this suffering? What has come of Mr.

Smalley's purchase of a new coat, something long in the sleeves and short in the skirts, of a new white cravat, of dazzling gloves? Nothing. An evening of discomfort. The early part of it spent in waiting and waiting till it should get to be time to go; the latter part of it in leaning up against a wall and being entirely neglected. As our Rising Man passes this worthy couple, he says to himself, "Now what *can* make people of that sort come out, I wonder!" At last the Smalleys go down to the refreshment-room together, and, as they consume an ice apiece, and scatter wafers o'er a smiling land in the attempt to eat them, they talk quite strangely and politely to each other, as if they were only slightly acquainted. They go home at last, and it is over.

There are many mysterious and unaccountable people who manage to glide into the best regulated and most select "at homes." The chief characteristic of all of them is, that they have nobody to talk to, and are shy of each other: engaging rarely, and only when desperate, in conversation among themselves. It is possible that to this mysterious class belong some of those distinguished ladies who advertise in the newspapers that they have opportunities of introducing into good society ladies who are desirous of mingling therein. These social pariahs drift into corners, and obstruct doorways, and smile as if they were enjoying themselves; but our Rising Man knows better than to have anything to say to them, though some of them who knew him when he was lower down in the social scale, make desperate efforts to catch that evasive eye of his, with which he looks over them, and through them to something else behind, and alongside them, and round them, in the most distracting way imaginable.

Is there no more pleasant view of "a room full of people" to be taken than this? Nay, that would be a sad creed, if we were compelled to take up with it. Happily we are not. There are people whom "society" cannot spoil, and there are some whom it only spoils temporarily. The young days of these last are their worst days. As they get older, they get wiser and better. And those whom society does really spoil, or whom, at any rate, it has the credit of spoiling, is it really to blame for their bad qualities? No. It develops, perhaps, a little sooner, qualities they would have displayed any way. They would most likely have been bad, cold, selfish under any circumstances. What sort of a boy was that same Rising Man? I knew him at school, and we used to be sworn allies, great chums and playfellows. But at the beginning of one "half," there came up to our seminary two sons of a wealthy neighbour of my friend's father: disagreeable boys enough, in no way, though I say it, more eligible playfellows than I was; yet I was from that time deserted, gradually let down, and there was an end to my intimacy with my friend. To adopt such ways is entirely foreign to the nature of some people. They enter the world. They try it. They are caught for a time by the glitter and the excitement, and determine to be distinguished among

people whom for a while they estimate over highly, they even fall into such people's ways, and are temporarily as cruel and as worldly as the worst about them. But this is only, after all, a phase. They are dissatisfied. There is compunction in their hearts. Ultimately, they either abandon the field in disgust, or remain, the fairest specimens of "people in the world," the pillars that support the fabric of society, the salt which keeps the great mass from becoming corrupt.

It is extraordinary how soon and how completely a person of naturally amiable character will, by a course of thoroughly "good society," be rendered arrogant and disagreeable. He is obliged to be so in pure self-defence. He begins by being good natured and unassuming, and he finds that it will not do. He begins by cheerfully saluting any individual to whom he has been introduced, whenever he sees him; he wears a pleased expression when in society, is ready to enjoy himself, and to help others to enjoy themselves. But, unless the man is foolish, this happy state of affairs is but of short duration. Honeywood finds his good nature imposed upon, and after a series of small conflicts in which he is worsted, he wakes up at last to the conviction that to live in society is to be engaged in a campaign. Snares, pitfalls, ambuscades, await him at every turn. Hand-to-hand encounters are numerous and fierce, while the general *mêlée* is of a terrific nature, and requires a quick eye, a confident and brazen soul, and a ruthless and unpyling heart. And after a few encounters Honeywood acquires these qualities. He never receives an invitation without misgivings whether it may not be a cover to some ambuscade. If the notice be a short one, he is sent for as a stop-gap; if a long one, the people are so anxious to get him that they are not worth visiting. How long after he has entered a room shall he take note of the existence of Mr. So-and-So? What length of time shall elapse before he bows to Mrs. So-and-So? It must all be calculated. No eagerness, no frank good nature, no admiration for anybody or for anything, and, above all, no quarter. Every slight must be treasured up, set down on memory's tablets, revenged years afterwards, if the thing be possible, repaid with interest, simple and compound. And it is well if this be all, and if the person who has injured Mr. Honeywood alone suffers by his retaliation. Things are not always managed with even so much of justice, and it often happens that Mr. A., or, still more likely, Mrs. A., revenges herself for the injuries inflicted by Mrs. B. on the miserable Mrs. C., who is herself altogether harmless and unoffending. And this is an almost incomprehensible depth of villany. Suppose you have been in a large company, and have been cut dead by the illustrious Prospero, it is natural that you should abhor that individual with that hearty hatred which Dr. Johnson is said to have approved of; but it is not natural that you should straightway go forth and cut Unprospero, who has never harmed you. Yet this is done, and done very often.

Among the novelties which it is the duty of a Small-Beer Chronicler to put on record as belonging to the age, must be mentioned an invention highly useful in killing time, called "Five-o'clock Tea." This is purely a thing of the day, and was a bright idea on Society's part. Ladies of all ages are very partial to this meal. It plays the deuce with the nerves, and it entirely destroys the appetite for dinner; but this five-o'clock tea has filled up a blank waste place. There is no time for ennui, now—unless, perchance, that terrific demon should be present on every occasion throughout the day, and preside over them all. It is always possible. For with all this variety, it is curious to think that a marvellous degree of monotony is perfectly consistent. Whether the social gathering is called a five-o'clock tea, or an at home, really matters little. The same people meet continually, the same things are said over and over again, and the same situations and scenery are in every drama. A man who goes about much, gets, at last, to know to a dead certainty what is going to happen at certain social crises. As surely as a particular scene at the opera, with a baronial hall and a table with an inkstand and an enormous pen, informs him that directly the curtain rises he is in for a notary and a contract, so surely does the appearance of certain instruments at a dinner-table and the tuning-up of the conversational orchestra inform him of what is coming.

I wonder how often the ensuing conversation has taken place, word for word, during the last twelve months?

"Lord Dundreary—oh yes, delightful, is it not?"

"Yes, capital—very amusing."

"I wonder what he's like off the stage. Did you ever see him?"

"Yes. I met him once at dinner."

"Yes? How very nice. And what is he like?"

"Oh, well, you know, he's a quiet, gentleman-like man."

"Really. How very delightful. I'd give anything to see him. They say that acting the part so often has quite made him stammer."

"Oh no, not at all. You wouldn't know he had ever acted the part. He doesn't look the least like the character," &c. &c.

Can anything be more monotonous, again, than the conversation of that wonderful class of semi-diplomatic wiseacres who get together at conversational clubs and other places of male resort? The man who "knows for certain that on that particular question government must go out—there is no help for it;" he, again, who "has it from a source that he mustn't mention, but which leaves no doubt of the correctness of the report, that Pilgrimage was sent for in the middle of the night to Windsor in consequence of the expressions let fall by the Secretary for Peace in the House, the night before last, and that on his return a cabinet council was called to consider, &c. And is it not remarkable that these same political prophets in no wise lose caste or fall in the estimation of those who listen to them, in consequence of the failure of their pre-

dictions? When one of these individuals, for instance, announces that a certain noble lord is going out of office on a certain question, and when the noble lord does *not* go out on that question or any other, one would suppose that this gentleman's next prophecy would be generally disregarded. Not in the slightest degree.

Oh, Society! what sacrifices do people make to thee; sacrifices of health, of comfort, of money, of sleep, of digestion, of temper, of inclination. And all for what? Apparently that they may have the opportunity of standing upon a landing-place and asking Mrs. Worldly Wiseman whether she has seen The Duke's Motto, and what she thinks of it—which, after all, does not matter much—or whether she has attended Professor Pepper's lecture at the Polytechnic, and what she thinks of *that*—which, if possible, matters still less. They get, too, the chance of exchanging defiant stares with several gentlemen who are possessed of a good command of eye, whom they know perfectly well, and who know them perfectly well, but who are as determined as they are, not to bob first. And these pastimes indulged in to the full, and a due amount of iced coffee swallowed, they are at liberty, being very hot, to cool themselves by attending Mrs. Worldly Wiseman to her carriage, bare-headed, with a keen north-easter blowing into the hall, and then, at last, to depart. The next morning their brains feel as if they had been boiled, and their eyes as if they had been roasted, their legs ache, they have a cold in the head, and rheumatism in the tendon Achilles.

To judge by people's countenances, they none of them enjoy themselves in society, and to judge by their conversation, they all feel it necessary to find an excuse for being there. One has a daughter whom she is bound to escort into the world; another has a sick maternal aunt at home who is amused by an account of the party. One gentleman comes because he is out of health, and his medical man recommends, nay commands, him to have change and amusement; another comes because it is his business to observe men and manners, and so he is obliged to go out. But they all dislike it; they all think it an irrational thing; they go forth, impelled by conscience and a keen sense of duty. In not one of which excuses need the reader place the slightest confidence.

#### BERLINGACCIO.

[The last Thursday in Carnival is called Berlingaccio—a night of special revel throughout Italy, when the gayest of the great public masked balls always takes place.]

ON Mad-Thursday night,  
When the revel shrieks,  
Boiling to its height  
Wave-like, ere it breaks;  
Jostled by the crowd  
(Yet to vulgar touches  
Cold as in her shroud),  
Stands Salviati's duchess,  
Dreaming half aloud;  
Dreading what she seeks.

"Black from head to heel—  
Mantle, mask, and glove—  
Scarce with life to feel  
If I loathe or love;  
Still I watch the throng  
Shouting, whirling round me.  
Oh! the hours are long  
Since this midnight found me  
Muffling up my wrong  
From the blaze above!

"Masks are gibbering past,  
Blurred by misty sheen.  
Ha! . . . the two . . . at last . . .  
Rather felt than seen!  
Yet, I mark each line,  
Hue, and fold, and feature;  
Even that curl of thine,  
Thou slight girlish creature!  
Peeping, fair and fine,  
Mask and cape between.

"Now, he turns to speak,  
And, to her reply,  
Smiling bends his cheek.  
Could they know 'tis I! . . .  
Hush! his tones are true.  
No more need of feigning!  
Love's old song grown new,  
Sweet beyond all training,  
Runs its gamut through,  
As in days gone by!

"What! . . . persuade! . . . endure! . . .  
Down! weak thought of shame!  
Were the winning sure,  
*Would I win the game?*  
Is his smile, forsooth,  
Worth one smile to gain it?  
Woman! . . . tell the truth!  
*Thou wouldst, to obtain it,*  
Give thy shred of youth,  
And thy spotless name.

"There . . . the monstrous show  
Laps them, like a sea.  
Much has been . . . I know . . .  
More has yet . . . to be! . . .  
Still I watch the flood  
Battling, shrieking round me,  
Cold . . . in mask and hood,  
As the midnight found me;  
Standing, where they stood . . .  
Doubting . . . was it he?

"Fie! false abject soul,  
To thyself forsworn!  
Wouldst thou shirk the goal?  
Drop the prey untorn?  
Have I dogged his track,  
Mutely fiercely thirsting,  
To be 'frighted back  
By a heart-string bursting,  
Strained upon the rack  
'Twixt revenge and scorn?

"Man! one last weird tie  
Links us fast and tight.  
Still I know thee nigh  
As I knew to-night.  
Ay, thou, too, shalt own  
'Mid thy flowery pleance



Rank with sins full-blown)  
Mine avenging presence,  
When thy joys lie strown,  
Rotting in thy sight!"

### THE RENOWNED DOG CÆSAR.

It was at Wearmouth, on the coast, where there were docks and vessels of war, and mariners, and a general sea flavour, that we—my younger brother Jack and I—were reared: at the apron, as it were, of an aunt of awful severity, and almost ferocious bearing towards the youth of either sex. She meant well; for to adults needing the many charities of life, she was gentle and gracious. But towards infancy her system amounted to a frightful terrorism. The town and its docks are fallen out of fashion; the mariners, and the ships of the mariners, have long since drifted away; that stern woman, who ruled so awfully in the little two-story baby-house at the entrance of the sea-town—a baby-house with a garden and wooden green rails in front, and a green paddock—hunting-grounds so exquisitely coveted, and so jealously guarded—that stern woman has drifted away too, in quite another direction. But there remains for me, in all its primitive gorgeousness, undimmed, untarnished, in the old glory, the old nimbus or aureole, the image of the Theatre Royal, Wearmouth, that glorified temple of the drama, rising in a sort of divine light and rosy cloud, all spiritual as it were, and redeemed from any taint of earthy grossness.

Taken in a strict practical sense, such as it would appear to persons of a prose nature, and setting its image before me at this date, it must be owned that it was a mean wretched tenelement. It was very old, very shaky and tattered towards the roof, sadly ruined, and, for a considerable margin running round its base, very soiled and slimy, like the green sediment on the sheathing of an old ship. An ancient shed ran all round; and over each door were faded inscriptions—a little awry, too—"Boxes"—"Pit"—"GALLERY." Gorgeous cabalistics they seemed; and though the approach to the sacred stage was up a lane, which I believe now must have been dark, boggy, and unsavoury. I used to look up the lane with an awe and exquisite interest, and an utter insensibility to the peculiar fragrance of the place. It was this divine beat which kept away a too near familiarity with the persons of those who took part in the inner unspeakable mysteries. Once, indeed, I saw a figure pass me, and turn up the sacred lane, and whose retreating form I pursued with a gaze almost stupefied. An interior instinct told me at once who it was; and though his face was of a curious dusky yellow, and though his coat was buttoned tightly, and his hat had acquired a sort of burnish or glaze near the brim, from too anxious brushing—still, through all their tokens broke out the divinity of the man. I pursued him with a sort of fasci-

ination until he reached the door, and was absorbed into those halls of Eblis—behind the scenes. It thrilled me. He would live constitutionally among the blue clouds, and the golden spangles, and crimson light (for the pantomime was then going forward, and the luscious description on the bills drove us wild), and rise up clarified, as it were, with an ambrosial light in his face, and clothed in dazzling celestial attire. It was maddening; for our ascetical aunt, following the tenets of the late Mr. Wesley, never let us near these demoralising seats of entertainment.

Shall I ever forget that morning when we—my younger brother Jack and myself—prowling about the town on our way to school, were attracted by a dead wall—a wall so dead, in fact, that decomposition had set in—which displayed to our enraptured eyes a bright fresh glaring primrose-coloured bill—glistening like a snake's coat with the fresh varnish of new paste. We were always greedy connoisseurs of such proclamations. It was the most delightful and entertaining literature we knew. They became Homeric for us; because, recording the works of godlike men and women. What dignity, what gorgeousness, what splendour in the titles! associations of which no rude awakening shocks could ever have divested us. But here, at the dead wall, with chins turned upward at an angle painfully inconvenient—for the officer of the theatre had placed his bill at a higher level than his wont (it was a Saturday morning, too, I recollect)—we read the delightful news, and were confounded with joy. The "Renowned DELAVAL Family" were engaged for three nights only, which was welcome intelligence in itself; but an arrangement had also been effected with their famous DOG CÆSAR! which was the special tidings that made our hearts beat. He was actually engaged to perform in an exciting, a real piece, the name of which we had never heard, and yet which was very dear and familiar, and strangely vital and suggestive—"The Dog of Montargis, or the Forest of Bondy!" What a breadth, a pregnancy of colour, as it were! Could the English language go further? A dreamy mystery hung over the yellow bill, and seemed to exhale from that glorified paste. Something French, something secret, something in the depths of a forest, exquisitely delightful. Nor was this all. There was a cut—a cut?—a vigorous picture—brought out in rich masses of printing ink, with the dog, noble creature, in the centre, and the moon, boldly portrayed, and trees, and a woman at the door of a house. Nor was this all. The characters were sustained by the Delaval Family—the "inimitable" Delaval Family—that is to say, by Mr. Delaval (of the Theatres Royal, London, Bath, and Bristol, indistinctly); Madame Delaval, also indistinctly, of the Theatres Royal, London, Bath, and Bristol; Mr. Paul Delaval, late of the Metropolitan Theatres (this much more cloudily); and "the Infant Marie Delaval," a little cherub of the stage, as yet far too young

to be associated with any establishment. Though yet unknown to us personally, we—my brother and I—felt a strange yearning to “the Infant Marie Delaval,” for even the bill, usually seasoned with the coldness of an official document, spoke of her delicately and tenderly. This gifted family, we observed, came forward later in their Grotesque Ballet Pantomime, entitled “The Scaramouche in Love,” which seemed to be an entertainment of much promise. But, somehow, our eyes seemed to wander back again to the glorious cartoon, done in the rich lamp-black, of the friend of man, the “renowned Dog Cæsar,” wandering in his mysterious forest. Lovely, indeed, was that bill against the dead wall; and we feasted on it until we knew its sonorous periods by heart; even until we arrived a full quarter of an hour late at school, and were put ignominiously with our faces to the wall. We little recked that public humiliation; we were far away, lifted above earth, in the society of the immortals, the Delaval Family, and the Dog Cæsar!

That Saturday was a half-holiday. In our way home we took the now etherialised temple of the drama. A horrid profanation had occurred in our absence. Some irreverent person had carelessly torn away a large segment of the bright yellow bill, dividing the renowned dog Cæsar diagonally across; barely the head and fore-paws of the injured animal were left. It was a cruel outrage. We found another not very far away; but somehow it had not the old glory; it did not show the original glisten and stickiness, so to speak. The first had endeared itself as though it had a special individuality of its own, and yet this was clearly an erroneous impression. It was the change in the renowned dog Cæsar that affected us. He seemed fainter—his impression that is; the black ink was not so vivid and abundant.

At home there was a strange surprise. There was our father waiting, come down from London to see us: nay, not only to see us, but to take us home for a week. Events of gravest import had occurred: the hand of a sister had been asked in marriage—the hand of the sister had been granted, and we were to be fetched to see the show. To-morrow we were to start; meantime, we would take papa out and show him the sea, town, docks, mariners, and the rest of the attractions. Was the same thought in both our little hearts? Was the same idea ever fluttering upward to our lips? With our dear father we always cultivated a republican freedom of speech; but it was the ineffable awe and grandeur of the subject that inspired us with timidity. But it is certain that, with a mutual instinct we artfully took him round by the strange and deeply meaning edifice which affected us so curiously. And, after all, there was indeed a sincerity in this motion, for we regarded it as by far the chief lion of the place. “What! eh!” said our dear father, gaily, “what’s this? Store of some sort? Oh, I see—used to be a theatre. Have they ever plays here now?” Our eyes met—my brother’s and mine, that is—

and we murmured timorously, “Oh, papa, the Dog! the Renowned Dog Cæsar!” We had drawn him near to a glistening bill; the glories met his eye!

We went that night—I cannot bear to think how wearily the hours dragged themselves by—and yet the bliss of that day; it was too much happiness for mortal boy. I had a sort of gentle palpitation of the heart which was distressing at times; it came from chafing at the constraint, and yet it was very sweet agony: but our aunt! gracious, what injustice we had done that injured woman! How we had secretly traduced her! We blushed for it, and wondered at our blindness. She entered into all the spirit of the festival; her ascetical spirit had vanished. She was enthusiastic, generous, co-operative; she lent her aid heartily to the adornment of our persons. She was busy the whole evening, decorating us with unprecedented splendour. What a fairy-like evening it was—a golden cloud hangs over it now—we walked and pursued the customary avocations of life as in a glory. The customary ceremonial of dinner was but indifferently executed, in strange contrast to the usual avidity that waited on that meal. We were too blissful for such earthly joys; there was a choking feel about the throat, and an interior disrelish, which rendered the meal unpleasant; it was got through in some fashion; papa occupying a time and using a deliberation that seemed unaccountable. Then to dress.

Delicious function! Such burnishing of the cheek, such moistening of the hair—never was personal adornment so delightful. There was a magic waistcoat of pale blue shot with silver, never worn before, and which had indeed been appointed for another solemnity, but through accident had been left buttonless. This my aunt—no longer ascetic—strained every nerve to have completed. There were white trousers—virgin articles and speckless; and there were short jackets, and black ribbons about our necks tied in elegant bows.

The dragging hours at length brought us to seven o’clock. At half-past the doors opened. Yet there was a feeling within us that no risk was to be run, and that a handsome margin of time was to be allowed to be clear of accidents. A fly, therefore, was sent for with all speed; with fluttering hearts we descended in our gorgeous apparel. It was a dampish interior, and had a perfume of ancient straw—yet how celestial seemed the vehicle. That aroma has been sweet in our nostrils ever since. A horrible thought—what if the household time had been astray, say by half an hour, or even by three-quarters! At another season the wildness of the theory would have been apparent on a moment’s thought, for an irregularity of that nature under the rule of my aunt—that exactest of the tribe of women—was almost ludicrously improbable. A moment’s calm reflection would have shown us this; but we were too agitated to let reason have her sway.

Here it was at last—a dark projection, with

unlimited flare of gas. Here was *our* door, with the epigraph "BOXES," on which played unsteadily, a lamp. A few people were standing about, one or two entering, and yet on the whole there was not the furore we counted on. What a fragrance again as we entered the passages, skirted by whitewashed walls, and sprinkled ever so delicately with sawdust,—a fragrance compounded of orange-peel, and a delicate aroma of gas, together with a damp vaultish savour, inexpressibly sweet. And then the check-taker; how courtly, how noble in his bearing (I believe him now to have been a very earthy creature, sadly corrupted with gin); and above all, the Unseen Hand that so mysteriously absorbed our moneys into that awful window! Another moment, and we are in the theatre! Exquisite sensation! Something between awe and a thrill, and yet ravishing delight, curiously compounded, as the somewhat murky interior gradually opened on us. And yet, though *now* it was something approaching to darkness, yet then it was more a subdued light and delicious sense of mystery. It must have been a raw and cavernous temple; somewhat, as I now suspect, broken out into moist patches and damp eruptions, with an universal unwholesomeness as to the plaster. The green curtain was mean, and a little ragged, and an unwholesome air seemed to float from the pit. But I saw none of these imperfections—it was all divine, sacred, and we gazed with ineffable reverence, and waited for the dog. Dimly does it now come back to us that there was not an overwhelming audience: which indifference to the claims of the drama affected us with secret wonder.

When our eyes had been satiated with the natural beauties of the scene, they found a sort of relief in wandering to the orchestra, which was now filling in slowly. I am bound to say, that the divine cloud did not seem to enclose those members of human society; but stopped short with the stage. Still, though regarding them with a certain familiarity, and as more or less mortal, they seemed lifted above our humanity, and formed a link between us and that brighter sphere to which they led the way. Even their entrance—how mysterious!—was out of the bowels of the earth.

And yet, looking back now, taking them for all in all, I am afraid they were not what would be called an efficient orchestra. I fancy five or six was their full strength; but no secret enemy can say that on that night they did not do their best. But the whole responsibility seemed to lie upon one member, who seemed to take upon himself more duty than was perhaps necessary for the complete balance of the parts. He sat apart, and long before the performance commenced, preludised softly to himself. His instrument was the cornet.

I am confident the music he discoursed was of a harsh, and what might be called an *ad libitum*, nature. None of the Band, I am confident, were shackled by the stupid conventionalities of notes or staves; and yet the effect seemed to be very

beautiful. Too much—a responsibility almost unfair—seemed to be thrown upon the shoulders of the drum—I mean upon the performer who made that instrument discourse. He never relaxed; but when there was even a hint of failing, came in splendidly to the rescue. Someway the wielder of the cornet attracted me more powerfully. He seemed more conscientious; yet this might be fanciful. There was something odd about his appearance that drew us to him with wonder. He always presented to us who were above, a sort of second face, for he was abruptly and shiningly bald; and the effect to us, was as of a small private pool or pond, surrounded with banks of rich verdure. He had a hopeless expression, as though he were blowing himself steadily to his grave, and at the same time a stern purpose in his blast, as though he were blowing a scanty subsistence for a numerous offspring at home. A few scattered brambles grew upon his upper lip, in the nature of a moustache, and he affected us with sadness.

It was a gloomy piece naturally, alas! I speak of the cold maturer view—with that Forest of Bondy in the dead of night, and a good deal of losing of their way by belated parties, and much measured speech, recriminating, defiant, and in various other keys; and yet how absorbing, how even fascinating, the whole history. How we sympathised with the noble Aubrey (he was captain in the French service at some indistinct period, when a large field of white facings was worn in front), who used literally to chant his heroic sentiments in a sort of measured strain. And was he not proprietor of the renowned dog Cæsar? Aubrey—the name Captain Aubrey, how musical, how melodious! It embodied all that was chivalrous, grand, gallant. Even in the bearing of that other officer in the same regiment, a man in whose breast every spark of manly principle seemed dead, and who was consumed with an unworthy jealousy of the noble Aubrey, even in him (*he* had large white facings too) we had that interest which attaches to bold reckless villany. It was impossible not to admire secretly, when the noble Aubrey was forced into a duel with him and actually won the first fire, how *he*—was his name Lesparre, or something in that key?—took his place with folded arms and without changing a muscle. We knew, as *he* knew well, that the noble Aubrey had his life at his command—and we gasped. A feeling, however, that was changed into uncontrollable admiration when the noble Aubrey discharged his weapon in the air, remarking at the same moment that "thus it was that Aubrey avenged himself upon his friend." Which admiring feeling was in no wise diminished by the fact that for the rest of the evening the air was charged with the sulphurous results of the explosion.

From the way in which the Captain—shall we say Lesparre?—received this advance, we gave him up. He must have been radically a bad man, and we were not surprised when the night drew on, and the noble Aubrey had to pass through the Forest of Bondy on urgent private

affairs, to find this bold bad man plotting some unholy deed. We had no fair data to go on, but we could see from the scowl and general deportment of Lesparre, that something was rankling in his breast.

It came to the Forest itself—the depths of the Forest—a *very* flat scene, which came from the right and left and joined in the middle; and at the same moment, to impart a sense of coming horrors, the lights went down to a degree that hindered all view of what was going forward. And yet there was an artfulness in this enforced obscurity, for otherwise would have been revealed—at least, I now feel an instinct of this description—a cottage and garden in the distance, with other objects wholly inconsistent with the depths of a forest. The mists of years rise up between me and that lonely and sequestered place; yet still I faintly recall that we were present at the deed of blood. The fact is, all gave way before the overpowering interest of the scene that followed, still vividly imprinted, even to the minutest particulars: the scene of the Midnight Cottage, with a real green door, and a real garden gate, and a bell, and general obscurity.

What was it that made our heart leap so? Not the skipping grasshopper music which was now being “made” in the orchestra, suggestive of spasmodic walking, and which had somehow a strangely oppressive effect,—not the silent and deserted aspect of the village hamlet (the proprietors of the green gate and bell being locked in profound slumber), not the breathless expectancy of the House, but the distant bark or “baying” (most exquisite music!) of the Dog (induced by pressure on his tail) heard behind! At that sound a strange physical impulse of rising and sitting down again in our places took possession of us—a pleasing yet disquieting restlessness—with an idea that force would be requisite to keep us down in our places. Every eye was strained to the wing. And here, with a sort of joyous canter, his mouth open, and a great red tongue lolling good humouredly out, as the habit of Newfoundland dogs is, entered the renowned dog *Cæsar*.

At last! Splendid creature, so noble, so grand, so massive. Black and white all over, shaggy, with his tail in a hairy and insolent cornucopia, and his hair, ears, and general person, swinging about him as he walked. We burst into a tumult of delight as he jogged across, utterly indifferent to the lights and intelligent audience who were regarding his movements, and, oh! wonder of wonders, reared himself on his hind-legs at the green gate, took a cord in his mouth, and rang the bell—at least *appeared* to perform that function. For how were we to know that the cord had been artfully rubbed with some substance of a rich and savoury nature (it *may* have been dripping), or that the bell was rung behind, by no other hand than that of his master, the wicked Lesparre! But wait. There was more to come.

To him opens the green gate a domestic of the house, plainly roused from slumber, with a familiar bed-chamber candlestick in her hand.

She looks round with inquiry for the human hand that, of course, has rung, and at last sees the faithful and intelligent animal at her feet. But mark what follows. The faithful and intelligent animal (on unseen invitation from the base Lesparre) seizes the familiar candlestick in his mouth, and ambles off with it (still lighted), all his coat swinging and shaking about him. Just at the end he stops a second (the base Lesparre has got round in time) and looks round over his shoulder by way of invitation, which motion has set the candle all awry, and has nearly lighted up his own tail—and then exit. Delightful creature!

It was only natural that on the disappearance of the noble Aubrey in the Forest of Bondy, something in the nature of an investigation should be set on foot. Was it the Colonel that took the matter up? Suspicion someway lighted on the vile Lesparre, whose deportment, lowering, surly, and with a general tendency to folded arms when questioned, did seem to fortify the impression abroad. Why linger over details? He is tried before some irregular tribunal; the case breaks down. Already there is an air of triumphant villany on his lips; when hark! once more to the familiar note at the side. The officers of the court look out anxiously in that direction; a lane is opened; and in comes, bounding, scampering, and his great red mouth opened with frightful ferocity, the noble Dog, making straight for the wretched criminal. The wretched criminal was seen to lift his two hands to his throat, no doubt for its protection (but in the days of later scepticism I knew it was actual invitation to the animal to attach itself promptly), and then followed a most distressing scene. The wretched criminal, when he found the dog was securely fixed in his handkerchief, sloped his back inward, held his arms out, as if in the natural agony of the moment, and began to turn round and round. The noble dog held on firmly, and by the motion was swung out in the air. Rounds of tumultuous applause from all sides. Still, strange to say, none of the court, or even of the soldiers in cocked-hats who were standing by, interfered, but all seemed anxious to allow canine justice to take its course. Finally, without apparent reason, the strength of the vile Lesparre gave way, and he tottered to the ground, while the noble brute got over him and burrowed at his throat, and barked furiously, and at the same time wagged the cornucopia, —although as if in apparent satisfaction. At the end of all, the music braying on mournfully, the green curtain slid down in sad folds; the members of the court formed in an exact semicircle round the dog and the vile Lesparre, now almost exhausted; and, with feelings of alarm and terror, we saw the soldiers in the cocked-hats pointing their muskets with deadly aim at the prostrate form of the murderer of Aubrey!

As the curtain fell, a feeling of deep grief settled on us, that we were never more to see the renowned dog, and that we were, as it were, parted from him for ever. But the audience began



to raise discordant cries, which were understood as a desire to see the noble animal once more, in a sort of private capacity. And presently the curtain being drawn aside, to our speechless delight we saw him again; that is, his huge bluff head, and red jaws and tongue, which it seems constitutional with him to keep on view, for respiratory ends. He withdrew it in a second, but reappeared a little suddenly, giving the idea of having been propelled from behind. He then stepped forth gravely and deliberately, and trotted across, swinging his coat in measured beats, until he reached the other end. Then something appeared to irritate the huge flap of his ear, and with a delightful aplomb, he at once dropped into a sitting attitude, and with his hind paw proceeded diligently to alleviate this cutaneous affection. The ease, the absence of shyness, the happy air, with which this operation was accomplished, would have done credit to any man of the world, were he trained in the very best circles. When the work was accomplished to his satisfaction, he retired, pushing the curtain aside with his nose. I question if this act, performed in a private capacity, did not endear the noble animal to us, more than his more elaborate performances.

A troubled feverish sort of night followed this first mental trouble we had known. Our hearts fluttered uneasily. The gorgeous lights of the scenic world danced before our eyes. Our neat and orderly chamber, otherwise welcome, became odious and prison-like. In the morning we awoke, and came down with a heavy, heavy weight upon our soul. To look back, it seemed a blissful night, bathed in golden purple, pink—what hue was it?—light. And the dog! Thrice noble, grand, brave, gallant, lovable animal. Then came an internal soreness as we thought of him.

In the middle of the day, our father took us away up to London: our aunt, over whom principle had now again asserted its sway, taking of us a cold and stern farewell. We were going home; there were joyful times approaching; unbounded cake, a certain freeness in a money direction, and a general license as to manners. Home was always welcome; and with such a festival as a sister's marriage! And yet on this occasion we went forth with mournfulness. We seemed to be leaving a friend. I believe—but we did not dare even to whisper this—that if the matter were open to such an arrangement, we would have cheerfully exchanged all our chance of future joys for one more night of canine happiness. A rash improvident contract, such would have been, but we would have entered into it cheerfully. Where was he now, the noble creature? How was it with him in private life? Did he feast on the fat of the land, as a dog of such gifts should? A hundred such questions as these entertained us, as we were borne far away from him and Wearmouth.

The family were in all the flutter and confusion attendant on the sister's marriage. We were welcome, yet not very highly con-

sidered. Would overlooked be too strong an expression? And yet our treatment, generally, verged in this direction. In fact, there was mantua-making on a gigantic scale going forward within the walls of the mansion, under the personal superintendence of our mother. This accounted for any apparent deficiency in the affections. Nor, in sooth, did we heed it. We were changed, and it was remarked that there was a moodiness in our bearing. Once, indeed, we broached the Dog, and volunteered a little narrative of that evening; but they were cutting out at the moment, and the fervent attention, after a moment's affectation of listening, wandered away.

The bridegroom we took to amazingly. Plusher was his name—John Plusher—a good fellow, honest, rough, and—he took us out and gave us treats. O, how we liked him! Possibly next to the noble animal Cæsar, to whom our hearts yearned more and more. And very soon we were tempted to unfold to *him*, the whole story of that splendid animal. Not only then, but often. Not only the mere narrative, but the most abundant details. He relished it. *His* attention did not wander. One day he proposed gifts—gifts of astounding value, to be measured by pounds—the object to be left to our election. What would we have? Come! We were not to be afraid, but to speak out. Come—a second time! We began to blush and glow, and to drop our eyes, and finally murmured the “Dog Cæsar.”

“By Jove! yes!” said Plusher. “I’ll go down to-morrow, and see if the theatrical fellows are there. Or, if they are gone, we can find out where they are. We’ll get him, never fear!” There was something so noble and confident in John Plusher’s manner, that it quite overcame us. Noble John Plusher!

Noble John Plusher arrived the next evening, after we had spent a day of horrible anxiety. This was the intelligence he brought. Two nights after the famous performance, the renowned Delaval Family had departed abruptly, taking with them all their effects, which were of a portable character. Taking with them also, the dog Cæsar. Perhaps this sudden disappearance (which was accompanied with secrecy and mystery) might be set down to disgust at the slender support accorded to their talents; but there was more probability in imputing it to a sudden call for a nightly settlement of accounts, which it seems the proprietor—who had a deep acquaintance with human nature—was accustomed to insist on. In fact, the Theatre Royal, Wearmouth, was usually taken on this precarious tenure, it being its lot to become suddenly occupied and as suddenly deserted, many times in the course of the year. It would have been supposed that from his acquaintance with this curious law, the proprietor would have been wary of his tenants. But somehow, the skilful Delaval Family had contrived to disappear, taking with them all their effects, and the renowned Dog CÆSAR. The noble creature, without any fault of his own, had departed under the odium

of not being able to meet his engagements. For obvious reasons, the Delaval Family had declined to leave its address. There was no hope. The noble dog was lost to us for ever. Honest John Plusher had done his best.

The marriage day came round. It was a great festival: a splendid occasion. All the neighbourhood rejoiced. We shone in apparel perfectly new; for, with a delicacy which we knew few would appreciate, we *could* not bring ourselves to desecrate the blue and silver waistcoat which was sacred to the memory of the renowned dog. We were in the habit of visiting that garment tenderly, as a relic. However, on this day of universal joy, we thought it but respectful to dismiss any mournful feelings of a private nature we might entertain, and consumed, silently but steadily, large blocks of a very rich and moist wedding-cake, until we actually became inert and almost torpid. In the evening there was to be a dance—a small dance—which was anticipated with happiness.

The day was long and weary, and the evening seemed to approach very slowly. Honest John Plusher and his young wife were gone—were already miles away upon their road towards honest John's country-house. The tears were over, the cutting out was over. Here is now ten o'clock at last, and the party is about to begin!

We had been a little uncomfortable towards four o'clock, and had gone to lie down; but by the evening were fresh again. The rooms were lighted up, the company was arriving, and here was the music—a harp in a green baize paletot with a strap round it, a fiddle, and a cornet. Men from Chopkins's, the eminent pastrycook of the district, who had "the direction" of the banquet, were already in possession of the place. I did not see them, but I heard of these things up-stairs, as I put on more festive raiment. For a moment, I thought of the blue and silver, as the drawer was opened—as a change from the morning's apparel the effect would have been superb. It was tempting; but a better spirit prevailed.

We went down and wandered into the dancing room; it was already full of lovely creatures—all flowers and general radiance. The men did not seem nearly such spiritual things. There they were, bowing, and going through their measures—a very pretty sight to look on, while the music played melodiously. They were wedged up in a corner, a little uncomfortably; and it struck me that the harp, whose instrument, projecting at an angle, was rudely brushed at times by passing dancers, must have a weary time of it. But he bore it with an angelic patience, as of one who was used to that sort of thing: while the cornet, who carried *his* instrument gallantly, holding it out dead horizontally, and blowing with a will—surely we should know *him*. What! The pool of baldness, and the banks of bulrushes fringing it—the sad blowing expression—why, we knew him at once, though only seeing him athwart the forms of fitting dancers! What a vicissitude of fortune was this!

Surely the finger of some mysterious power was here! Again our hearts began to flutter.

As soon as the dance had stopped, we stole round to have a better look. It *was* he. There could be no mistake. His manner of discoursing the music, too, suggested the night. At first we thought of an introduction; but, on reflection, considered such would be a delay unnecessary. So, we went up to him and boldly recalled to him the Wearmouth Theatre—and—the dog. He was confused, yet nobly admitted the connexion. We entered freely in conversation. He had indeed been attached to the Delaval Family; but they were "a bad lot." Even, he would go so far as to say, a shabby lot. They lived by defrauding humble people who were struggling to maintain their families. The dog? Oh, yes. Clever enough, but nothing *as* a dog.

Here the leader tapped the back of his fiddle impatiently, the harp was tilted back on to the shoulder of its proprietor, and they struck into the popular Fury Galop. I was left in the tortures of expectancy to know what had become of the renowned dog Cæsar. I would wait until the next interval; and in the mean while, as I was standing thoughtfully, determined not to lose sight of the cornet player, a massively built military person, coming round with express velocity, struck me heavily, and nearly flung me across the fender. At last the Fury Galop was done, and I drew near to my cornet player, with whom I might now be said to be intimate. He was good natured. I told him my story. He sympathised with my affection for the noble creature. He himself was not possessed of much information as to the present residence of the Delaval Family; but he had a brother—Where? where?

He hesitated a little; but he told me all eventually. His brother, like himself, had had dealings with the Delaval Family; and, like himself, had, so to speak, been betrayed by the Delaval Family—sold, I believe was the word he used, which, though indistinct, conveyed to me the idea of horribly base treatment. This brother, the victim of the Delavals, could give information on the subject; but there would be, the cornet player owned, much delicacy necessary in dealing with him; for he was a man of peculiar temperament, rendered sensitive by his reverses, and who had moved in far higher walks of life. At this juncture the harp again reeled back on its proprietor's shoulder, and the whole band struck vigorously into the opening bars of *The Lancers*. A "set" forming close by, imprisoned me for a considerable period, but I got free at last, and stood at the door burning for further particulars.

As I stood, a voice was borne to my ears, which did, indeed, seem tuned in a familiar chord. It seemed that I had heard it somewhere in the past, a richly measured cadence, something like chanting. Good gracious what did this mean? Events were crowding so thickly on this momentous night! I struggled to the door, and looked out. I saw nothing, heard nothing; our mother was sitting there in state outside, on a

cane-bottomed chair, to receive the company. It was perilous to speak to her. Where was the voice? Hark! There it rang out again! "Mr. and Mrs. Jenkinwaters! Miss Jenkinwaters! Mr. Alfred Jenkinwaters! Major Pumpes!" Surely it was the voice of the noble Aubrey? But here was a stately man, in a white tie and a white waistcoat, stepping up-stairs, with a bearing infinitely majestic, a herald to the Jenkinwaters family.

I could not recognise him. I should never have known him. But the voice still rang musically in my ears. And yet there was a mournfulness in his deportment, an air of suffering and placid resignation in the way in which he went through his function, that was to me inexpressibly affecting. I longed to accost him, to enter into familiar relations with him. But I durst not; for our mother was still sitting enthroned in the cane-bottomed chair.

I got back to the cornet, with whom I was now on a footing of deep and confidential intercourse. "I have seen him," I whispered. "Mr. Lorimer is——" (The noble Aubrey was Lorimer in the bills.) "Hush! hush!" said the cornet, looking round. "There ain't no Lorimers here. That's the stage. Perkeboyes is *his* name." "But," said I, "Mr. Lorimer——" "I ain't Lorimer neither," he said, a little pettishly. "Valvoni—Signor Valvoni's *my* name." Wondering at this curious difference in the case of those who were brothers, I was yet restrained from further inquiries by the manner of Signor Valvoni.

Before the night was over, it was settled that my friend the cornet should arrange with his brother: who was too sensitive, after his gross treatment at the hands of the Delaval Family, to endure any allusion to the subject from third parties. He would communicate the result at a pastrycook's some two streets away. He originally proposed the assignation at a public-house; but that I firmly declined.

Now it was that I missed the supporting aid of honest John Plusher. The whole weight of the negotiation was thrown upon my shoulders. And yet the first thing necessary, I felt, was to put myself entirely in his hands, far away as he was. I was much pleased with the shape of this sentiment, and got it by heart in bed, the next night; though, indeed, I believe this putting myself in his hands was but an inducement to his putting something in *my* hands. Still he had promised, and so I determined to appeal to him in a manly way. This expression also struck me as being fine, and I got it also by heart in bed. The result of the whole was a letter composed after many hours of agony (the procuring the note-paper involving the sin of larceny), a strange production, made up of many tottering capitals, and suffering from caligraphic cramps and palsy:

"my dear john,—i hope you are quite well, and i hope sister Jane is quite well also. i and mama are very well too. i met a man who heard of the dog—i wish you were here—to put myself in your hands in a manly way—far away as he was. please write.

"Ever your affectionate and friendly brother."

It struck me nothing could be more delicate, or even elegant, than the way in which this was put. I read it over several times. I read it to my younger brother, who was lost in admiration, and sucked his thumb with wonder. I even—vanity getting the better of prudence—read it privately to Mary the housemaid. She kindly advanced me the sum of a penny on my own personal security, to defray the postage.

By return, came a letter from honest John. Such a letter! I had not miscalculated his noble nature in putting myself so freely in his hands, far away as he was. Nothing could be nobler, grander, than his conduct. He said, leave it all to him; he would manage it: and let Perkeboyes, or Lorimer, put himself in direct communication with him. He was up in town in about a week. He kept the assignation at the pastrycook's; in another fortnight, the renowned dog Cæsar had retired from his dramatic career, and become a member of our family.

I believe the Delaval Family must have been in sad straits about this time, from the physical condition of the frame of the noble animal. There had been a conjoined indifference in the public mind both to the family and the unrivalled animal. However this might be, they were eager to part with their dog. They parted with him for, I believe, a not extravagant sum, the amount of which the innate delicacy of honest John would never let me know.

My mother naturally objected to receive the noble dog into her family, but she was a tender woman—is still, for I am glad to say she still rules our mansion—and gave way. After his first meal, consumed with a frightful greediness, the result of many days' abstinence, he at once showed a disposition to enter into the most cordial relations. He gained rapidly on all the members of the household. There was an honest bluntness, a plain straightforward manner, about him, that conciliated all. He kept his great mouth and red tongue always on view, and panted habitually, like a sort of canine steam-engine. He was so large and great and stately: so reasonable, and so quiet: that it was impossible to overlook him, or consider him other than one of the regular members of the family. He asserted himself firmly, yet not obtrusively.

Strange to say, he could never be got to go through any of his dramatic efforts: such as ringing bells, or carrying flat candlesticks in his mouth. Any approaches in this direction he seemed to shun as though it were a discreditable page in his life which he would willingly blot out. His connexion with the Delaval Family he would have the world forget; he showed his sense of the indelicacy of any allusion to the subject—which might take the shape of hanging an imitation bell-cord before his nose, or trying to encourage him to take up a flat candlestick in his mouth—by raising himself slowly on his feet, and walking slowly from the room.

But he had other fancies and accomplishments which were very pleasant, and which, as being of an unprofessional nature, he never had any objection to exhibit. On being invited to

"Speak," he would gather himself up, simulate a certain ferocity, and finally deliver himself of a startling bark in a full deep key. Or, he would be shown, say a glove, or a whip, or other portable article capable of being conveniently carried in his mouth, and would be then brought away down into the street, round the corner, up past the square, for a quarter of a mile or more. His demeanour during this interval would be of a strange and mysterious sort; for he would walk with his great black eyes fixed steadily, and with a painfully earnest expression, on the face of the party directing the experiment. To smile, or even allow a muscle to stir, was fatal; he instantly interpreted it as a signal of acquiescence, and was off and away, bounding along in a sort of heavy gallop, his tongue lolling out, his great ears swinging like saddle-bags, and the momentum of his progress clearly dangerous to unguarded passers-by. The door being left open, he would come tearing up-stairs, dash in rudely and boisterously, seize the article, and disappear. It was dangerous to play any trick with him on these occasions, for he felt that it was a question of character, and he allowed no consideration to stand between him and duty. The flat candlestick was once tried to be palmed on him by an artifice—an insult which he resented by withdrawing himself from all friendly intercourse with the family for the space of nearly a day and a night.

The hours of joy and social entertainment I spent in the society of this noble creature are not to be described. He was positively a second brother to me; and I hope I shall not be considered wanting in fraternal love, if I say that I believe his mental powers were, if anything, more developed than those of my first brother. Our walks were delightful. In the house he enjoyed universal respect, as a sensible, well-bred, kind, generous, high-souled gentleman, who would not descend to a mean action for the world. From the housemaids, especially, not a breath ever came to tarnish his good name. His memory is still green, and—Ah! his memory! I must come to that now.

It fell out in this way. It was a Saturday night, and extensive painting operations, carried on diligently through the whole week, were at last concluded. The house was fresh and resplendent, and we felt a natural pride in its glory. I recollect that Saturday so well! We went to bed; but I remember being awakened with a start, and finding the butler, in his waistcoat, standing over me with a lighted candle. "Hush, Master Jack," he said. "Get up and come down. Poor Cesar! The poor dog!" I started up, and was dressed in a moment. "Hush, Master Jack! Don't let the mistress hear." "And what is it?" said I, very agitated. "Oh, he's bad, he's very bad. I'm afraid—"

We hurried down and crossed the yard to the wooden tenement where poor Cesar usually resided. The butler carried the candle—one of the old, old objectionable flat candlesticks. As we came near, we heard mournful and piteous groans, and there, at his kennel door, was

stretched out helplessly—his noble flank heaving distressfully—his head rising and falling again on the flags, with short gasps—the brave creature, the dear dear dog, the gallant Cesar! "Those painters!" said the butler. "Some of their stuff had got mixed with his food." "Call up the house—fetch a doctor," I cried, distractedly. The butler was a sombre man. He shook his head. "In a few minutes he'll be past that! the poor brute." I wept over him. "See!" said the butler, holding down the candle. The light fell upon his head, still working up and down convulsively. I called to him despairingly. "Cesar! Good dog! Good fellow! Poor Cesar! Old fellow!" I was choking, and here fairly burst out. "He don't know you, Master Jack," said the butler, still holding down the light. The large bright eyes were glazing very fast, and the eyelids were dropping down quietly over them. "Good dog!" I cried again, quite hysterically. "Poor fellow! Don't you know me? Dear old fellow, don't you?" The glazing eyes gave no sign; but the large bushy tail, which had been lying out quite straight and limp, began to move ever so softly—the motion was almost imperceptible, just as if a breeze was stirring the hair a little. That grateful recognition from the dying dog was inexpressibly sweet to think of, long, long afterwards. And then the butler, who was naturally a humane man, took me away into the house.

This is the simple history of the Renowned Dog Cesar, once the property of the Delaval Family.

### OUR OIL-FLASKS.

OIL? Of course every one knows what oil is. Florence oil—for salads—comes from Florence in those thin flasks always on one side, with a wicker covering that never stands straight, stoppered with cotton wool, or the blunt end of the little straw tassel, when people are untidy and put things to wrong uses;—comes out of the olive-berry, those mouldy-looking green things, all salt and oil, which one eats after dinner and thinks very nasty, but daren't say so, and doesn't know what to do with the stones, when one is young and shy and not up to all the nicenesses of table-manners. Surely there is nothing so very particular about oil that one need make an article out of it! And yet it has some curious facts and circumstances connected with it in its various appearances: quite curious enough for a ten minutes' rapid reading in among the graver tasks of the day.

There are two kinds of oils, the fixed or fatty, and the volatile or essential. The first are bland and mild to the taste, and, whether of animal or vegetable origin, are all composed of oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon, but with a large proportion of carbon, which makes them good for food and light. They are the chemists' "oils," "tallow," and "butters." The second are hot and pungent, chiefly used in perfumery and as stimulants in medicine, and of a very



varied chemical composition—some containing only carbon and hydrogen, as the oil of turpentine; others adding oxygen, as the oil of cloves; and others containing sulphur, as the oil of garlic. But our present flasks are all filled with the fixed or fatty oils: the volatile or essential must wait their turn.

By the discoveries of Chevreul, "the father of the fatty acids," as he is called, the fixed oils are known now to have three invariable constituents, oleine, margarine, and stearine—all compounds of glycerine with fatty acid—and it is according to the greater or less proportion of one or the other that fat is more or less fusible or solid. Thus, oleine is liquid at any ordinary temperature, but margarine is solid up to 116 deg. Fahrenheit, and stearine up to 130 deg. Fahrenheit. An experiment on these two substances may be made by those fond of chemistry and not afraid of evil smells or dirty fingers. Melt some solid mutton fat in a glass flask, and shake it with several times its weight of ether. When cool the stearine falls in beautiful soft crystals, leaving the margarine and oleine in solution. Press out the soft mass of stearine in a cloth, and evaporate the liquid remaining: you will then get margarine and oleine together, if you press them out through folds of blotting-paper. The residue, dissolved afresh in ether, gives pure margarine; very like stearine, only melting at a lower point. Oleine is difficult to get pure. The best way is to freeze olive oil, when the margarine crystallises and sinks, and the oleine is left floating at the top, and can be skimmed off. The importance of all these discoveries, and which of the animal fats and vegetable oils have more or less of these compounds, can hardly be over-estimated, when we see their practical results in the beautiful candles which are sold now at half the original cost, and more than twice the light-giving power, of the ancient wax and tallow; and in the pure and bright burning oils—so pure and colourless that they reveal the secret of straw-coloured gloves, and do not let them pass for white.

There is scarcely a portion of the animal body that has not fat mixed with it, either in separate masses, or indistinguishably; as in the bones and fibrous parts of the body to be got at only by certain processes; but not many plants yield oil. The richest are the cruciferous tribe, including the seeds of radish, mustard, rocket, camellina (gold of pleasure), garden cresses, and rape, in the three varieties of *Brassica napus* et *campestris*, the common rape; *Brassica precox*, summer rape; and *Brassica campestris oleifera*, or colza. But these are not all good for food or light; some of them being of the kind called "drying oils," as we shall see presently. The quantity of oil to be got from plants and seeds varies, not only in different species of the same thing, but according to climate and culture; still, for broad measurement, it may be said that nuts yield half their weight of oil; *Brassica oleracea* et *campestris*, one-third; the variety called colza, in France, two-fifths;

hempseed, one-fourth; and linseed from one-fourth to one-fifth. The grasses and pea tribe (*gramineæ* et *leguminosæ*) rarely give a trace of oil; only one of the former—the roots of the cyprus grass, which is not a true grass by the way—and two of the latter; both foreign. One is called the oil of Behen, from the seeds of a plant (*Moringa aptera*) growing wild in Arabia and Syria but cultivated in the West Indies, and chiefly used in perfumery, "to dissolve out the odoriferous principle of the flowers," being absolutely pure, mild to the taste, inodorous, becoming slowly rancid, and free from all acid: the other is ground-nut oil, from the *Arachis hypogæa*, a native of America. The properties of ground-nut oil were tested by a kind of accident in Europe. A large cargo of nuts had arrived at Bremen, and found no purchasers in their natural state, as good for luncheon or dessert; so the importers expressed the oil, and then found market enough. Where the ground-nut grows, that is, in tropical climates, the inhabitants eat the seeds raw, which then have a slight resemblance to haricot beans, or make them into a kind of paste-like chocolate. They are very pleasant when properly roasted, which is rather hard to get done down stairs; and have the further quality of being wholesome and nutritious. The potato tribe, *Solanaceæ*, give us henbane-seed oil, tobacco-seed oil, and oil of deadly nightshade; while the *Rosaceæ*, which term includes the peach, cherry, plum, almond, and the seeds of the apple, are among the most valuable of all. But the king of the oil-yielding trees is the Olive; that dusky, dusty-looking, shadeless, narrow-leaved, humbug of a tree, which disappoints every one so bitterly at first sight, and for which Europe is indebted to the Greeks of past times, who introduced it from Syria, where the Hebrews had long known its virtues.

The salad oil of commerce and our summer dinners, is said to be got from Nice and Genoa; we call it Florence oil, in a grand kind of generalising way; but excepting the coarse shipments from Gallipoli, good chiefly for machinery, we get but comparatively little Italian oil at all, and very seldom good olive oil unadulterated, even from Aix and Montpellier, whence our chief supplies come. Poppy oil, ground-nut oil, and oil of sesamum, adulterate our table oil; colza oil adulterates the second running of olive oil, for the manufacturers; and colza oil itself is adulterated with various cheaper oils, but principally with whale oil. All of which may be discovered by various chemical tests, by which the oil changes colour according to the kinds employed; but by ways and appearances too long to give here.

The olive harvest at Aix is an important circumstance in the local life; on the good or ill result of which depends the well-being or misery of many hundreds of people. When gathered, the fruit is heaped up in barns and cellars for a few days, to allow just the beginning of fermentation to set in; only the beginning; for, if suffered to ferment throughout the mass as it lies

there, the whole yield would be ruined, and rendered useless save for the coarsest purposes of manufacture. When the exact moment has arrived between loosening and fermentation, the olives are put into bulrush bags, called *cabas*, and crushed very gently under a screw. The pale, greenish-yellow, limpid, sweet, inodorous liquid that runs from this first gentle squeeze, is called *Virgin Oil*, and is the oil used in the watch trade, being a kind of idealisation of oil, not clogging the finest wheels; but happy the gourmand who can go shares with the watch-makers, and command fresh virgin oil for his kitchen! Nothing in the world is such a delicious cooking medium; and the *cordon bleu* who can get this, dispenses with all forms of lard or butter, until the pale, greenish-yellow turns to a more decided gold, deepening and deepening till it gets the awful hue and flavour known as rancid. When the virgin oil has run out, the half-crushed olives are taken out of the bags, to be put in again with boiling water, and again pressed, a little harder under the screw this time. The oil and water run out together; and, when cold, the oil floats on the top, and is skimmed off with flat laddles: "*lever l'huile*" the technical term. This is Ordinary Oil, and very good for the table, too, when perfectly fresh, but inclined to become rancid sooner than the virgin. After the skimming there is still some oil left in the water, which is led away into a large cistern or reservoir, called *l'enfer*, where it remains for many days, the oil gradually collecting on the top. Then the water is drawn off from below, leaving the oil, which is known as *l'huile d'enfer*, or *Lamp Oil*. Another yield called *l'huile fermenté*, is oil got from olives in a state of fermentation; but this is rarely employed, and the oil is never met with in trade. Only the virgin oil and the ordinary oil are sent abroad; *l'huile d'enfer* and the horrible fermented stuff are mercifully kept at home.

Though Spain has such magnificent fruit—the Spanish olives are much larger than the French—she makes but inferior oil, owing to the rudeness and poverty of her machinery, whereby the olives ferment before they can be crushed, and thus the oil is never quite sweet or pure, and soon turns violently rancid. Which is the reason why that terrible smell and taste of bad oil, mingled with the smell and taste of garlic, destroys every meal cooked in Spain; while in Italy you have oil cookery without any of these disagreeable results. Italian oil is certainly first rate, though the machinery employed is not much superior to the Spanish. As for the Gallipoli oil, the manufacture of that is of rudest and simplest description. The Neapolitan women and children pick up the ripe fruit as it falls from the tree, fling the olives into a mill and crush them up body and bones, skin and kernel together; whence streams forth an oil, according to the law of olive nature. They ladle this oil into skins—sheep, goat, kid, bullock, anything handy—and send it to the seaport of Gallipoli, to be clarified in the huge cisterns cut in the rock on which the town is built; and to be finally shipped

off to England and elsewhere, under the name of Gallipoli oil; but by no means to be attempted for food, for frying fish, or for summer salads.

Almond oil is got by squeezing bitter almonds, which are cheaper than, and as good as, the sweet, between cold metal plates. This is the first quality; the second is got by pressing them again between heated metal plates, the heat acting as a further power of expression; and the result of both processes is a sweet-tasted and inodorous oil. When an almond-scented oil is needed, then the almonds are first blanched in hot water, and carefully dried again previous to being pressed; by which process the oil retains the odorous particles, and is the "oil of bitter almonds" we all know of. If we want the essential oil of almonds, which is quite another thing, the marc or bitter-almond cake left by the first process—the almonds with all the bland oil expressed—is distilled with water, and the essential oil passes up with the steam and condenses in the worm. Cocoa-nut oil is obtained by heat, pressure, and water, all together. It soon turns rancid, and is principally used here for candles and soap; but employ what perfumes we will in the latter, the horrible smell of the cocoa-nut oil survives and overpowers everything, and when the rose and the almond and the lavender and the patchouli have all vanished from our hands, cocoa-nut oil remains. The Indians and Cinghalese use this oil largely as a pomade, but we cannot do so, unless we become indifferent to evil smells as a national characteristic. Palm oil is that gold-coloured "butter" which one puts into home-made pomades, more as a colouring agent than anything else, seeing that it soon turns rancid, and so spoils the whole making. It is said that palm oil, when fresh, has the odour of violets, but I suppose I have never met with it perfectly fresh, as this is a fact quite undiscovered by me. It is principally used in making candles, when it is bleached, unless people chance to prefer them of a muddy yellow instead of white; and that sickening-looking stuff which the railway porters dab into the wheel-boxes to keep them from taking fire, is palm oil and tallow, mixed with a little soda lye.

We all know something about colza oil; those of us at least who use moderator lamps; but we do not all get it quite pure as it comes from the seeds of that special brassica devoted to its expression. Colza oil was put on its trial in 1845, when Faraday reported on its excellences and blemishes, on behalf of the Trinity House, interested in getting the best light at the least cost, and, until then, burning sperm in all its lighthouses. This report was decidedly favourable to colza; the light being full one and a half as compared with sperm oil, and the cost three and sixpence a gallon as against six and fourpence for the sperm. The price has risen since then, unfortunately, being now, for the ill luck of the consumers, four and ninepence or five shillings the gallon, and decidedly not better than in the early days; indeed, not so good, because now adulterated, which it was not then.

Not only for light, but also for food and manure, is the colza plant valuable to the world. Cattle fatten on it, and ground fattens on it; and the Abbé de Commerel, the introducer to the French Agricultural Society in 1789 of this chou à faucher—"mowing cabbage," as he calls it—was a greater benefactor to mankind than he dreamed of. Colza cabbage may be said to have been one of the agents of civilisation.

Then there is laurel oil, or "the oil of bays," got from the berries of the bay-tree (*Laurus nobilis*) principally from Italy and the south of Europe generally; the greater part being shipped from Trieste, and which our doctors and veterinary surgeons use as a stimulating liniment for sprains and bruises, and in paralysis. Is it one of the ingredients of the famous nine oils? Also the native oil of laurel or laurel turpentine, imported from Demerara, and got by making incisions in the bark of a large forest tree called by the Spaniards *Azeyte de sassafras*, and growing in the forests between Orinoco and Parime. These incisions yield a pale yellow oil, smelling something between turpentine and oil of lemons, and easily dissolving caoutchouc. The *Valeria Indica*, a Malabar tree, gives "piney talow oil," if the fruit is boiled in water and the fat skimmed from the top. It is white and smells pleasantly, makes good soap and candles out in its native place, but is little known, and less used, here. Then our spindle-tree gives us an oil as well as butchers' skewers: an oil yellow and thick, bitter and acrid to the taste, and in odour like colza; and the beech-tree has nuts good for feeding pigs, but better for the twelve per cent of oil to be expressed from them—a clear oil, thick, inodorous, and pale-yellow in colour, used in France for both light and cooking, and in Silesia, by the peasants, in the place of butter. And there is the oil of mustard-seed, good for soups and cooking; and tel oil, or the oil of the *Sesamum Orientale*, called "oily grain" in South Carolina, and used for soups and puddings like rice, the oil coming in for salads, and, indeed, being often mixed with olive oil: the oil of Behen, already spoken of; rapeseed oil—the ordinary English rape, which is the best—used for lighting, for the manufacture of soft soaps, in the preparation of leather, and for oiling machinery; plum-kernel oil, tasting like the oil of sweet almonds, transparent, and of a brown-yellow, soon turning rancid, but much liked in Wurtemberg for lighting purposes; and the "butter of cacao," had from the nuts of the *Theobroma cacao*, when crushed in hot water, and had to the extent of fifty per cent. It is yellow, but can be melted white in hot water; smells and tastes like the cacao-nut; is of the consistency of suet, and keeps long fresh without turning rancid. And, lastly, there is the "butter of nutmegs," prepared by beating the nutmegs to a paste, steaming them, and then pressing them between heated plates. This butter is imported in oblong cakes covered with leaves and looking like common bricks, of an orange colour, firm consistency, aromatic and fragrant in odour, like the nutmegs themselves—when not

wooden. A spurious article is sometimes made of animal fat boiled with powdered nutmegs and flavoured with sassafras; but it can be easily distinguished by the vary. All these are the non-drying oils, good for food and light, the oils which, as they grow old, get thicker, less combustible, offensive to the taste and rancid, irritating the throat in consequence of the acid that is developed in them. But that acid can be removed by boiling rancid oil in water, with a little magnesia, for a quarter of an hour, or until it no longer reddens the litmus paper.

Now we come to the drying oils, those which go chiefly to make painters' varnishes, which dry up into a transparent, yellowish, flexible substance, with a skin formed over the surface of the oil, by which all alteration of its condition is stopped. When boiled with litharge, or oxide of lead, they become even more drying, as every painter, fond of experiments, knows; and if one-eighth of resin is added to the process it greatly improves the look of the painting when dry. First, there is linseed oil, which makes printers' ink when it has been burned and mixed with one-sixth of its weight of lamp black, which is a final dressing to thin gummed silks, which varnishes leather and oilcloth, and which, when thoroughly expressed from the seeds, leaves "oil cake" for cattle-feeding and the destruction of pleasant milk and butter. Then there is walnut oil, an even more rapidly drying oil than linseed, used chiefly for paints and varnishes, and, because it gets white by age, for white paints; and hazel-nut oil; and poppy oil, from the seeds which have none of the narcotic properties of the capsules whence we get the laudanum, the seeds being sold for birds under the name of maw-seed, and quite harmless. The oil is like olive oil in look and taste, and is used to adulterate it; when treated with litharge or subacetate of lead, it is used for paints—without such treatment, for lighting. Hempseed feed birds, and give a capital oil for varnishes; also sometimes used for lighting, but not often or satisfactorily, for it makes a thick edge and clogs the wick; it does better in the soft soap and paint manufactories. Sunflower oil makes soap; it is sometimes used for food, and sometimes for lighting, but chiefly for soap. Grape-seeds have an oil which must not be confounded with the fusil oil obtained in the rectification of spirits, whether from grape or corns, for the one is bland and insipid, inodorous, and sometimes, in the south, used for food, and the other is simply disgusting, but largely used for confectionary. And there is the oil of belladonna, which is used in Wurtemberg for lighting and cooking limpid, golden-yellow, insipid, and inodorous, with all the poisonous principles left in the residual cake, which cannot, therefore, be used for cattle-feeding, as other more harmless residual cakes, and the expression of which stupefies the workmen employed. And there is tobacco-seed oil, limpid, green-yellow, and inodorous, and with no more of the narcotic principles of the plant than poppy-seed oil. And, lastly, there is castor-oil, and there is croton oil;

the one got by expression from the seeds of the *Ricinus officinalis*, or *Palma Christi*, the other by expression and distillation by alcohol, from the seeds of the *croton Tiglii*. And what the first is our nursery knows too well in the hours spanning Christmas-day and Twelfth Night together in one arch of feasting, pleasure, morning tempers, rhubarb and magnesia, and the doctor with still nastier punishments. These are the principal vegetable oils, of the fixed or fatty kind.

The only animal oils, properly so called, are lard oil, tallow oil, and neat's-foot oil; and these are obtained from the fats of the various beasts indicated—from hog's lard, from sheep's tallow, and from cow-heel: but the fats, or stearine, or adipose tissue, or by what name soever it is considered well to call them, come quite under another heading, and do not rightfully run into our oil-flasks. Lard oil is used for greasing wool; tallow oil makes the best kinds of soap; and neat's-foot oil oils church clocks admirably, because it does not solidify at even a comparatively low temperature, and does not soon turn rancid.

The animal oils are few, and the fish oils are not many; but of enormous value. First, there is train oil, which comes from the whale, the porpoise, the pilchard, the seal, and others; an oil of a brownish colour, disagreeable to the smell, used for lighting, for making soft soaps, and in the preparation of leather; also, says historical ill nature, much valued as a winter dram by Russian sailors, to whom a pound of tallow-candles is as welcome as a box of bonbons to a Spanish belle. The peculiar, and most peculiarly disagreeable odour of train oil, is due to the decomposition, during the homeward passage, of the animal matter attached to the blubber, by which is developed a certain fat composed of glycerine and phœnic acid. Porpoise oil is very like whale oil. Cod-liver oil is got from the livers of the common cod, the dorse, the coal-fish, the burbot, the ling, and the torsk. In Australia, the liver of the dugong is used instead of the cod: but no dugong liver oil has found its way over here. Fish oil of various kinds is largely used for soap-making; and the famous Naples soap is made from fish oil and potash, giving a marvellous lather for strong beards; but before any soap can be made, the glycerine of the oil must first be got rid of, when the fatty acid is mixed with alkali, and soap is formed. In the case of glycerine soap, the glycerine is put back again, when it combines in a different manner. Diachylon plaster, an insoluble soap, is only lead and oil: and ammonia and oil is a "volatile liniment, forming a milky emulsion, and used as a rubefacient in medicine." Are there many who recognise in these majestic words our old greasy friend, the hartshorn and oil bottle?

Then there are the essential or volatile oils, found in various parts of plants; in the flowers of some—as the orange-flower (*neroli*), the dried clove-bud (essential oil of cloves), the elder-flower, lavender-spikes, rose-leaves (*attar* or *otto* of roses), jessamine, mignonette, camomile, and

indeed in all sweet or strong-smelling flowers; in the fruit of others—as the oil of bergamot from the ripe fruit of the *Citrus bergamia*, the oil of nutmegs (not the butter), extracted from the mace which is the inner lining of the nutmeg, from juniper-berries, orange rinds, and lemon rinds; in the bark of others—as oil of cinnamon from the bark of the cinnamon-tree of Ceylon (*Laurus cinnamomum*), oil of turpentine, distilled from the "oleo resin" of pine-trees, and when rectified and redistilled, sold as the camphine which smokes so abominably when not sufficiently supplied with air, and which smokes more abominably still when it has been left exposed to the air, by which it becomes resinified again, and unfit for burning; in the leaves—from orange-leaves, from the dry leaves of the *Melaleuca cajuputi*, known as cajuput oil from the Moluccas, oil of savine, from the leaves of the *Juniperus sabinus*, and others; in the seeds of many, and in the roots of a few. But the essential oils have a less varied usefulness than the fatty; and if a law was passed prohibiting the use of perfumes, there would then be very few distilled at all. But all are not distilled; for the essential oil of certain flowers, in which resides the perfume, or what chemists call the "odoriferous principle," is so delicate and evanescent that the only way to get at it is by imprisoning it in a neutral medium, as in the process called enfleurage. Scented buds and petals are gently laid in perfectly inodorous grease, which thus becomes impregnated with the perfume.

Oil has a peculiar facility for developing heat. If hemp, or wool, or paper, sawdust, rags, soot, shavings—what not of refuse—be smeared with oil and left to the free action of the sun and air, they will soon get hot, begin to smoke, and finally burst into flame: which accounts for many of the apparently mysterious fires of mills and manufactories. And if linseed oil and ground maganese are "triturated" together, the soft lump so formed will speedily become firm, and take fire of its own accord. Oils are purified by sulphuric acid, by steam and hot air passing through them, and by tannic acid. Mineral oils, so called, are not oils at all, according to the proper definition of oils; they are fluid hydro-carbons, with the addition, in the Burmese naphtha, of a considerable quantity of paraffine.

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